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With best wishes for many
happy returns of this day
good health and happiness
Yours very sincerely
William
Basel October 22.1902

MEMOIRS
OF A COURT PHOTOGRAPHER

H.M. THE KING OF THE BELGIANS. 1917.

MEMOIRS OF A COURT PHOTOGRAPHER

By
RICHARD N. SPEAIGHT, F.R.P.S.

LONDON
HURST & BLACKETT, LTD.
PATERNOSTER ROW

H.M. The King of the Belgians
1917

Frontispiece

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By

RICHARD N. SPEAIGHT, F.R.P.S.

LONDON
HURST & BLACKETT, LTD.
PATERNOSTER ROW

(1926)

To
MY WIFE

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY JARROLD AND SONS LTD. NORWICH

I have pleasure in acknowledging the invaluable help rendered to me by Mr. Charles Graves in the preparation of these Memoirs.

R. N. S.

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MEMOIRS OF A COURT PHOTOGRAPHER

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

Apologia—Ancestry—First camera—Business instincts—First price list—Apprenticeship days—Theatrical reminiscenses—Miss Geneviève Ward as sitter and pupil—Arthur Bourchier, amusing incident—The Empire, breach of etiquette—The Gaiety Girl and "leading ladies"—Firm of F. & R. Speaight founded—Regent Street premises—Reformed type of studio—Use of electric light—Sitters put at their ease—Points of contact studied—Some interesting sitters—Lord Athlone in uniform—Hall Caine at his best—Rev. Mr. Dawson in pulpit—Studio in Camden Town—Visits to European galleries—Original of poster for "Skipper" sardines—Theatrical clientèle—Queen Victoria's drawing-room—Specializing as child photographer—Lady May Cambridge—Her mother—History repeats itself—Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, a child beauty—Myrtle Farquharson, her future husband—Lord Wendover the darling of his family—The Hon. Mary Gardner and others.

EVERY autobiography owes an apologia to the world. Mine is easy. What can you expect of a man whose father printed *The Sporting World* on Mondays, *The Christian World* on Wednesdays, *The Church Times* on Thursdays, and *The Licensed Victuallers' Gazette* on Fridays—all on the same machine?

With such a mixture of blood and ink in my veins it was surely inevitable that I should, sooner or later, join the great majority—and write my reminiscences. At least I am, I believe, the first of my calling to do so ; pugilists, prime ministers, lawyers and poets, painters and actresses, murderers and bishops, blackmailers and master-grocers have all written of their experiences down the ages. Why not a photographer ?

I come, then, from the family of Speaight & Sons, the master printers of Fetter Lane. The Speaights have been connected with the city of London since the reign of Edward IV, and THOMAS SPEIGHT, who was Master of the Merchant Taylors' Company in 1509, entertained members of Charles V's train on that monarch's visit to London in 1522. Another ancestor fought in the Napoleonic wars. It was left to William Speaight, born in 1752, to originate the present spelling of our name. My maternal grandmother was a cousin of George Dance, R.A., and Sir Nathaniel Dance-Holland, Bart., R.A., the names of both of whom occur frequently in the *Faringdon Diary*.

Enough of that. My first camera was given me at the age of twelve, and I became the proudest child in London. At once I determined to photograph the principal sights of London. I well remember fixing my camera on the steps of Trafalgar Square. In those days a camera, especially in the hands of a skinny little boy in knickerbockers, with a mass of unruly hair which the focusing cloth did not improve, was more or less a novelty, and a crowd

soon gathered round me. Then the wind blew the wretched thing down. Still I did obtain quite a fair picture of Landseer's lions and the fountains. While on the same errand I was photographing the Houses of Parliament, when a policeman came up and started taking an interest in me. Whereupon it struck me that the best thing I could do, in view of the possibly hostile interest of the policeman, was to ask him to pose against that great statue of Richard Cœur de Lion outside the House of Lords. After I had photographed him, I asked for his name and address, so that I could send a proof to my first patron. Meantime the crowd which had collected imagined that I had committed some misdemeanour, and, seeing him taking notes, was anxious to render me assistance with the usual desire of the English crowd to help the under-dog. However, everything passed off peacefully.

Now photography was an expensive hobby, especially for a schoolboy ; it must be remembered that the days of press-the-button had not yet arrived, and I had to find means of obtaining fresh materials.

I attended Tollington Park Grammar School, and it was whilst there that I undertook my first commercial venture in photography. Much as I am now opposed to complimentary sittings and to what is known as the "unwanted photograph," I am afraid that as a thirteen-year-old I was hopelessly guilty. I saw the Headmaster, Mr. William Brown, and asked him if I could photograph him in the playground. It was rather in fear and trembling

that I approached the great man. However, he was amused at the idea and readily assented. I really have forgotten the number I sold at sixpence a copy amongst the boys, but I quickly realized the commercial possibilities of the camera, and before long was thus able to purchase a better camera and more materials. I next wrote to the local clergy and other celebrities, and asked to be allowed to go to their houses for sittings on Saturdays. This enterprise immediately had its reward. I went round to the local stationer and sold the photographs at a very cheap rate, grossly, almost criminally, neglecting the etiquette of the trade and undercutting a still well-known firm of photographers in Baker Street. However, it left a very fair margin of profit. Oh, I was a most business-like child and, whenever any local function like a charity bazaar was imminent, I presented copies of my latest photographs to be sold, thus showing an early appreciation of gratuitous publicity.

Later I acquired a tiny printing press of my own in order to print my mounts, and with this I made my first price list—shown in facsimile on the next page. Yet, had my father survived, I should have gone into the Navy. It had all been decided, and I was designated for the engineering branch. But his death when I was twelve years old altered all this, and my early beginnings as a photographer were allowed full scope. For two years I was apprenticed to Messrs. Sands & Hunter, camera-makers, of Cranbourne Street, where I learnt all about the mechanism of the camera, and at the age

R. N. Speaight.

PHOTOGRAPHER.

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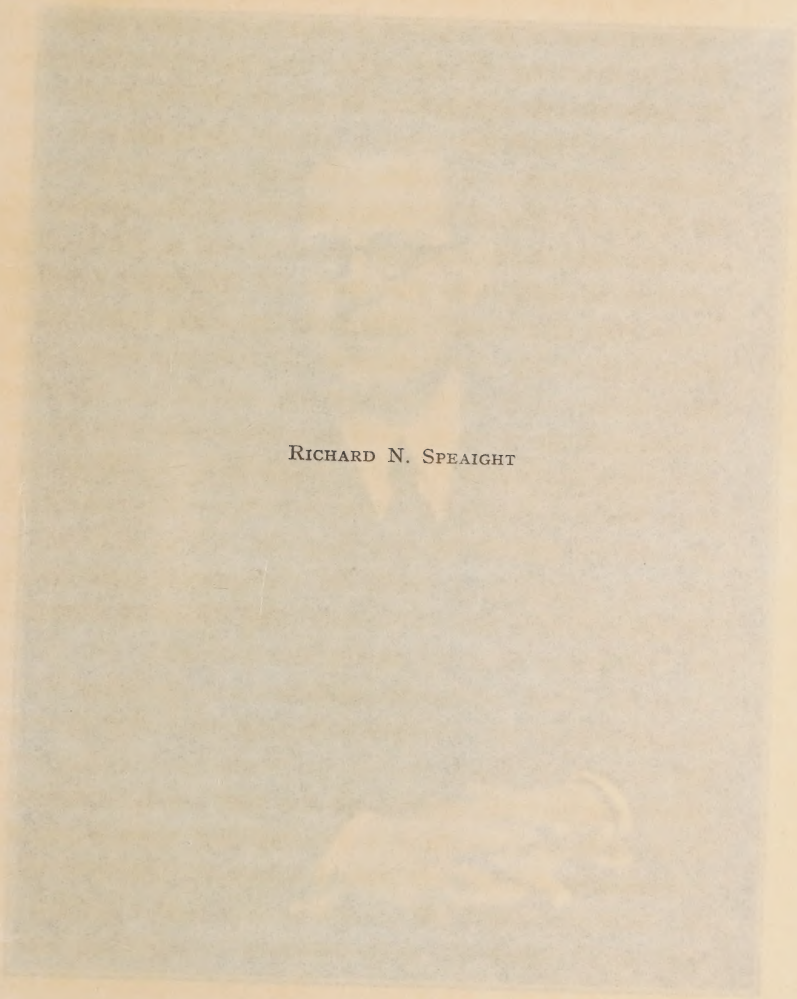
My First Price List

of seventeen I became an apprentice to Martin and Sallnow of the Strand, the theatrical photographers.

Here, one day, the operator was taken ill and Miss Geneviève Ward—the famous tragedienne—dressed in the gorgeous costume of Catherine of Aragon, entered the studio. I was delighted at this unexpected chance. Miss Ward must have been amused, for though I had seen her at the studio on several occasions, she had never been so patient or entered so well into the spirit of the photographer as on that occasion. When the pictures were taken I was naturally most anxious to develop them, and on the impulse of the moment asked her whether she would like to come and see me develop the plates. She assented readily, and you can imagine the scene ; here was I, a lanky junior apprentice with one of the greatest actresses of the day almost as excited as myself. Quickly I took off my jacket and rolled up my sleeves, and there we were, closeted together in the poky, stuffy, smelly dark room. (In those days we used ammonia tremendously.) Miss Ward —and I may say there was barely room for the two of us—stood there in her glorious brocaded gown, skirts turned up almost above her knees—common enough nowadays but very dashing then—peering over my shoulder. It was, I suppose, the first time she had ever seen the image slowly materializing on the plate, and I really believe it thrilled her—almost as much as a successful first night. At any rate, she uttered little gasps of excitement throughout the process. Before leaving I asked her to give me her autograph. It was the first of a



RICHARD N. SPEAIGHT

To face page 29

large series of autographed portraits which I now possess.

Another early theatrical memory is connected with Arthur Bourchier, when he opened the Royalty Theatre over thirty years ago and with Violet Vanbrugh and James Blake produced the "Chili Widow." One of the most dramatic scenes was in the Prime Minister's office, which had a series of pneumatic bells on the table. Just as he was making love to the Chili widow she would sit on the bells, and from all the entrances the whole of the staff appeared. One day I went round to see the stage-manager and took the table-top on which these bells were arranged because I thought they would make a good accessory. As I was walking towards the studio in the Strand, Bourchier, seeing his famous bells being carried along in all their nakedness, so to speak, was furious and shouted: "You damned young upstart! Who on earth gave you permission to do this? If anyone who has seen the play notices you, he will see that these things are dummies, and that will give the whole game away."

In 1895 Gabrielle Juniori and Yvette Guilbert were the best-known Vaudeville artists and between them attracted all the "Johnnies" to the Empire. Though only nineteen at the time, I had through my theatrical connexion the entrée to most of the West End theatres. One night I was sitting in my usual corner seat of the first circle when Juniori, after taking her three or four encores, caught sight of me and beckoned in my direction. I was as proud as Punch. Without more ado I hurriedly made my

way towards the stage door—the envy of all those who saw me. Unfortunately the manager, Dundas Slater, also noticed me and taking me to his office gave me the biggest dressing down on the etiquette to be observed in the theatre that I have ever had. The Empire, of course, did not then possess too savoury a reputation, and the manager's action was prompted by the fear that my departure might be misconstrued.

When the " Gaiety Girl " was produced at about the same time, I was one of the first to take photographs on the stage. I had never done it before, but thought I would like to try. George Edwardes and G. R. Simms were standing beside me. In my anxiety I was shouting from the dress circle where I was installed, giving the position I wanted the company to take up. " Would the ' leading lady ' come a little more forward ? " I called out. The next thing I remember was a huge smack on my shoulder from Edwardes and " You young ass ; they are all leading ladies."

Then in 1896 came the great day when we went into business in Regent Street. I was still under age, but my eldest brother Fred—who was afterwards responsible for the Marble Arch scheme and other London improvements, and had always taken the deepest interest in my career—said he would set me up in business, and with a capital of £500 the firm of F. & R. Speaight was founded. My brother was then, and always has been, a man of big ideas. I can still remember how he threw himself into the business side of the partnership, and insisted on our

taking a vacant Regent Street studio situated between the premises of the then two leading London photographers, Walery and Van de Weyde.

Those were the days of the great revolt against the discomfort of mid-Victorianism. Luxury was creeping in everywhere. The older hotels were being completely reorganized to compete with the ideas of comfort carried out by the newer ones. Art and dress were being revolutionized similarly. I did my best to apply the new spirit of the times to photography. I was determined to eliminate the wooden postures and mechanical smiles which make the elders among us blush whenever we look at our early photographs in the pages of Victorian albums. (Oh! those rustic stiles!) We decorated the studio in an absolutely new way. Instead of those dreadful old pictures which still survive in dentists' waiting-rooms, instead of the china ornaments on the mantelpiece, instead of the hideous horsehair sofas and plush brackets, we used pastel colours and comfortable arm-chairs.

I was much interested, too, in the use of electric light for photographing, and had often thought, when seeing actresses on the stage, how very becoming the arrangement of the light was to them. So I set to work and experimented on using electric light, not merely in place of daylight in dull weather, but by regulating the lights from behind and also low down in front of the sitter, to produce an effect similar to that seen at the theatre. *The Stage* wrote in June, 1896: "Messrs. F. & R. Speaight have arranged an ingenious lighting contrivance for the

special benefit of theatrical sitters, enabling the face to be represented exactly the same as seen from the stage." Never did I guess at that time that thirty years afterwards this method of lighting a sitter from odd points would become so popular as to be used by prominent photographers all over the world.

But how was the real change in photography to be made ? It was not a question of securing better cameras. Cameras, practically speaking, have not altered at all in the last thirty years. I used the same camera to photograph Princess Mary's baby that I used to photograph Princess Mary herself when a baby. Naturally, the lenses were different, but otherwise it was exactly the same.

No, the problem was clearly to be solved by putting sitters at their ease. The most assertive man will feel self-conscious and therefore look foolish in front of the camera. The most unblushing maiden will be uncomfortable before the blank stare of the lens unless you capture her interest. What I had to do was to get inside the skin of my clients, whether dowagers or children, politicians or generals. So I set to work. For the children I bought teddy bears and dolls, balls and other playthings. For the dowagers I sat up reading Debrett and dress fashions. For the politicians I made it my business to know all about the most recent by-elections and the latest speeches. As for the officers—well, more than once I have been able to explain how they should put on their full dress uniform, the most difficult details to fathom in such cases being the aiguillettes on the uniform of aides-

de-camp. (The aiguillettes are, of course, all those golden cords which are fastened across the chest.)

For example, in 1921, when King Albert was visiting this country, the tailor who was making his uniform of Field-Marshal in the British Army was uncertain about some of the minor details, and came round to me for advice. I gave him a series of photographs of Field-Marshals in uniform, and these, I understand, went to Belgium for future reference.

During the Great War, too, a famous general took advantage of my knowledge of uniform. He had come in on his way from the Front wearing a webb belt which needed readjusting and which he was unable to master. I stepped forward and put it right.

"Where did you learn that?" he asked.

"In the Volunteers," I replied.

"Huh!" he said. "They have taught you something then."

At the risk of becoming tedious on the subject I propose to tell another story, this time illustrating the woodenness of most photographs taken on State occasions.

A few days before he left to take up his appointment as Governor-General of South Africa, Lord Athlone came into the studio to watch his wife being photographed.

"Aren't you going to be photographed in State robes too?" she asked him.

"No," he said, "they always turn out so badly."

" Is that your fault or the photographer's ? " I broke in, greatly daring.

" What do you mean ? "

" Well, your Excellency, weren't most of the photographs of you in uniform taken after a levée or wedding or State banquet, and weren't you in a great hurry to have them over and done with ? "

" Yes, true enough."

" Surely, sir, you owe it to South Africa to be photographed in your uniform and give me an hour for it ? "

" You've put it fairly. I will."

He was, I am glad to say, quite pleased with the result. Certainly he made a magnificent figure.

The ability on the part of a photographer to talk to his clients on any topic that will interest them, and so distract their attention from the immediate business in hand, is a side of his qualifications that he cannot afford to ignore. In fact, it might almost be compared to the conjurer's patter. By some means or other sitters must be delivered from the devastating effect of their own self-consciousness. And unless this can be done no photograph will be a success.

Whatever happens, people must not be allowed to put on what they consider to be their best party faces—faces that, in reality, are mere masks. For not every one is as self-confident as Sir Hall Caine, whom I photographed at his private house years ago. In order to get a normal atmosphere he did not want to be distracted from his work.

" To get me at my best," he said, " you must take me at my writing-table."

The trouble was that I had the utmost difficulty in getting him to stop being at his best. While I was preparing my apparatus he wrote sheet after sheet, throwing them upon the floor, where they lay in the most dreadful muddle. I was sorry indeed for the unfortunate secretary who had to piece them together.

Another remarkably confident sitter was the Rev. Mr. Dawson, the once famous Noncomformist minister of Highbury Quadrant.

" You must take me in the pulpit," he said, " to get the right atmosphere."

And it was so. We went to the church ; there he stood, positively preaching to me. Suddenly he stopped.

" Put your camera on the Communion Table," he said. " You will get a better view."

I do not know when I have been so taken aback. Being brought up a strict churchman, I stoutly refused, to his intense annoyance, and I actually performed a feat of legerdemain by balancing the camera between the two front pews.

No, most people have to be coaxed with the greatest subtlety into looking their best and most interesting. Schoolboys are especially difficult subjects.

For years I have read all about the prospects and the scores, the names of the two teams, and, in fact, every possible detail about the Eton and Harrow matches. For, later on, those used to be specially busy times for me.

The greatest asset of all, however, was learning about women's dress. It is always sound to tell them that what they are wearing is the latest fashion, to know the difference between tulle and ninon, and so on. I remember once, when chiffon velvet was just coming in, that a woman entered the studio with a dress of this material. For once in a way I was nonplussed and had to ask her what it was. This was fortunate, for an hour later another client came also wearing chiffon velvet. " That is lovely material, isn't it ? " I said ; " chiffon velvet, of course." She was delighted.

One night after a Court—again this was some time later—a client brought in her mother, aged and tired by the tedious waiting. She whispered to me : " Praise her lace." I did so.

A knowledge of children's pantomimes, too, is most important, and Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny have for years been friends of mine. Even now I have my favourite dolls. A child would come in with a rabbit, and I would produce mine.

" What is yours called ? " the child would ask. " Mine is called Peter."

" Oh ! " I would reply, " this is Benjamin Bunny *and* he goes to bed with me. Does yours ? " And so it went on.

But apropos of a knowledge of dress. One day the Marchioness Curzon came in in a beautiful tea-gown. I admired it enormously and said so. " It came from Paris," was the comment. My very next sitter was the Duchess of Westminster wearing an exact replica of the same gown. Again I admired

it enormously and said so. "It came from Paris," was again the comment. Fortunately they had not met on the stairs. I've often wondered if I should have said anything. As it was, both Lady Curzon and the Duchess were photographed in, as I say, precisely similar clothes. I did my best, though, to pose them as differently as possible.

Meantime, in my anxiety to improve my work, I took a studio in Camden Town, where I studied art whenever I had a moment to spare. It was a popular quarter, with Arthur Rackham on one side of me and T. H. Robinson, then a serious young student, on the other.

For it has always been my contention that you cannot be a professional photographer unless you are also an artist. I painted a number of pictures—I don't say they were much good—but at least I learnt all about anatomy. Some may know one of my efforts, however—the poster for "Skipper" sardines of the old man with a fish-net on his shoulder. Many years after that "masterpiece" my secretary informed me that an old man named Anderson wished to see me. It was a common enough name, and it was only when I was face to face with his rugged old countenance that I recognized in him the original of the "Skipper" sardine poster. In the good old days Anderson was a famous artist's model and I had been lucky to secure him for my picture.

"I ought to owe you a grudge," said Anderson. "You ruined me."

Now, it is not a nice thing to be told that you have ruined anyone. My conscience was quite clear,

however, and I thought he was, perhaps, a little mad, or anxious to borrow from me.

"It's all right, guv'nor," Anderson continued; "but you made my face so famous with that there poster of yours that none of the other artists would employ me and there I was with my living gone. However, I went round to Angus Watson, the firm wot paid you for the poster, and they were so pleased that they've pensioned me off quite comfortably."

So I had at least one success!

But I never had any desire to be a painter. I only learnt enough about it to help me in photography. Similarly, I have never failed to take any opportunity to make a tour of the principal art galleries of Europe to refresh my memory and to borrow ideas from the works of the old masters. I shall never forget my admiration for, nor would I care to say how often I have benefited by, the wonderful grouping of the "Last Supper." In particular, the arrangement of the hands—always such a problem—has impressed me and guided me many times since. Students of art may have noticed how Herkomer, too, was inspired by the "Last Supper" in his famous portrait of the "Royal Academicians' Selection Committee." By a strange coincidence both a reproduction of Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece and Herkomer's sketches for his picture are hanging near each other in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House.

But I am getting on too fast. In those first few months of the Regent Street Studio it was not a question of coaxing people into looking normal;

Il Maestro

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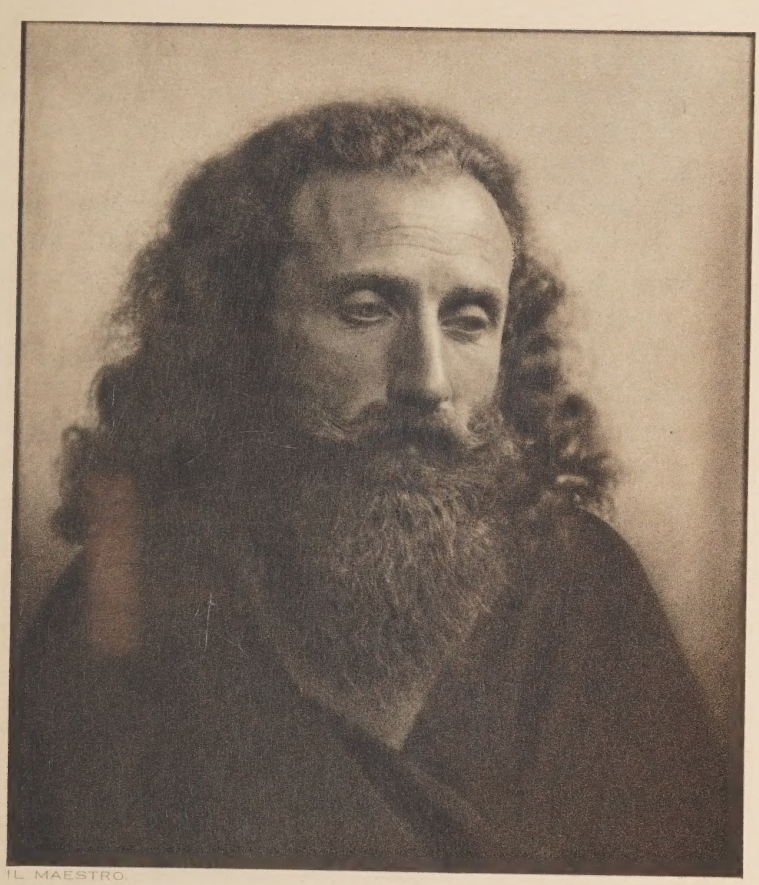


IL MAESTRO.

it was a question of coaxing people into the studio.

From my apprentice days I had acquired quite a good theatrical clientèle; indeed, my first sitter of all when I had set up practice on my own was an actress—none other than Irene Vanbrugh. I shall never forget her graceful figure as she heroically climbed round the bales of carpet and over the trestles to reach the, as yet, unfinished studio. It really was extremely nice of her. She did not actually need any new photographs at all. She came in order to give me a chance of displaying new specimens of my handiwork to advertise the studio. And she was so interested that though I was only a boy she let me choose what dress I wanted her to wear. Another early sitter was Ada Vincent, one of the most illustrious actresses of the Empire régime. My best picture of her was as Marguerite. I remember photographing Constance Collier, as Cleopatra in the Empire Ballet, at about the same time, and never have I seen her in any costume that suited her better. The photographs of these talented actresses were very useful in helping me to secure other clients.

But I had no intention of specializing as a theatrical photographer any more than I ever intended to specialize in child photography, which afterwards became my destiny.

As an example of my early struggles I may mention the way in which I secured my first clients for sittings in Court dress. Looking out of my window just before one of Queen Victoria's "Drawing-

rooms," I saw with intense envy rows of carriages adorned by powdered footmen waiting outside the older-established studios on either side of us. Something had to be done at once. The second Court was only a fortnight away. The following morning I went round to ask Willy Clarkson, who has always been a good friend to me, to supply me with a specimen Court dress. Willy quickly entered into the spirit of the adventure and gave me everything I wanted. The next step was to secure a pretty model. Our studio, being over Gerard's, the Court florist, there was no difficulty in obtaining a bouquet, and the great work began in earnest. No highborn débutante has ever had more attention paid to her Court portrait. I photographed my model in a dozen different positions and worked late into the night to have the proofs ready as soon as possible. The end justified the means. The specimen photographs attracted no fewer than two clients for the next Court—the wife and daughter of one of the secretaries at the Russian Embassy.

I had got my start as a Court photographer.

Soon I began to specialize in children. One of my earliest sitters was Lord Wendover, and I shall never forget the wonderful adoration paid him by his family. He was a beautiful child, with masses of fair, curly hair. His parents had had five daughters before he was born ; so their joy was natural. It was quite hard to tell who was the most proud of him, they, his nurse, or his sisters. The nurse was one of the old-fashioned kind, fast dying out now. She is still alive and well, so I am told, and lives down at

Daws Hill. Another lovely child was the present Earl Spencer. His grand passion in those days was a little wooden horse which lay around the studio to beguile the children.

Masters of public schools and dons at universities count as one of the great compensations for an arduous, grinding life, the reward of seeing how their pupils develop in later life. " I told you so " must be frequently on their lips when they discuss the brilliant doings of favourite boys or the failure of the duffers. Jowett of Balliol was famous for his frequently accurate prophecies.

But there: *they* only had their raw material before them for three or four years, whereas *I* have had the advantage of studying the gradual development of my youthful subjects from their childhood upwards. (A great help in this connexion has been our scheme of publishing editions of " Baby's Album," whereby proud parents could keep inside single covers the photographs of their children up to the time when they come of age.)

It would have been impossible while doing this not to conjecture their future; to watch, as they grew older, the budding of their romances and, later on, to compare the appearance of their own children with that of themselves at the same early age.

Some years ago Princess Alice came to the studio with her daughter, Lady May Cambridge, who did not want to be photographed, and said to her: " Shall I tell you what you used to do when you were a little girl and Mr. Speaight photographed

you ? " Lady May replied : " No, I don't want to know at all." So I turned to her and said : " And shall I tell you what your mother used to do when she was a little girl ? " Princess Alice, however, laughingly rebuked me. " That's not fair," she said, with evident memories of one morning years ago at Claremont—then the home of her mother, the Duchess of Albany. But of that later.

Many of my child clients have since married each other. For example, Myrtle Farquharson, daughter of the Farquharsons of Invercauld, was one of my most regular sitters ; her mother not being content with an annual photograph, brought her proudly to me two or three times a year. At exactly the same time, too, Baroness d'Erlanger used to bring her small son Robin. As far as I know, they never met in the studio, but they married only last year.

Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon was another visitor about the time when I was photographing the children of our present King and Queen, including, of course, the Duke of York. Even in those days there was no doubt about her becoming a great beauty, with her perfect little features and lovely curls of dark hair. I well remember her in a large straw hat clinging to a bouquet of wild flowers. How far I was then from guessing what life had in store for her !

Lady De La Warr used to bring her children to me too. Her son, the present Earl, came to be photographed during the war when he was serving as an able-bodied seaman.

The Hon. Mrs. Hope Morley, then the Hon. Mary

Gardner, was a very favourite sitter of mine. More than once her nurse and I designed together the picture frocks that she was to wear for her photographs. How proud her sisters were of her!

Another extremely good sitter was Judge Eady's little girl Dorothy.

CHAPTER II

FIRST EXHIBITION

Exhibition of "Children of Royal and Noble Birth"—Sixteen Royal sitters—Visit to Sandringham—Queen Mary and her children—Our present Prince of Wales and his gracious handshake—Rigid etiquette at Osborne—The Duchess of Albany and the Princess Alice—Contretemps at Bagshot—The Duchess of Fife, artistic talent—The stately homes of England—Warwick Castle and the beautiful Countess—Blenheim Castle—Lord Blandford's donkey—Lady Ancaster seeks help in organizing fête in aid of the N.S.P.C.C.—Temporary studio fitted up in Regent's Park—Imperial Coronation Bazaar—Noble Patrons—Operatic and dramatic stars as helpers—Artistic souvenir—Baroness Clifton as Saleswoman—"Mr. Chinaman,"—A 'busman's holiday—Nude studies—An indignant ecclesiastic.

BY this time I had photographed a sufficient number of beautiful and interesting children to justify the holding of an exhibition. We called it an exhibition of "Children of Royal and Noble Birth," and it contained two hundred portraits. This was in May, 1900. No doubt the most interesting of all were those of the sixteen Royal children.

And now I must tell you of the most thrilling Christmas present I ever received. It was a telegram delivered at my private address on December 25, 1897. It came from Sir Henry Burdett, and it instructed me to go to Sandringham to photograph the grandchildren of the then Prince of Wales—in fact, the present younger members of the Royal Family. My being selected was the sequel (quite

unpremeditated as far as I was concerned) to a good deal of charity work we had been doing on behalf of the late King Edward's Hospital Fund. I shall never forget my excitement. The first thing I did was to hurry round to the home of every friend I could think of to beg, borrow, or steal any and every portable Christmas toy which they had given, or proposed to give, to their children. I wanted them, of course, to amuse the Royal children while I was photographing them at Sandringham. One in particular—which belonged to me—was a toy model of Harry Lauder. Sir Harry does not know what I owe to him by proxy. That effigy of his Scottish pawkiness afterwards amused the Royal children of Spain, Sweden, and Germany too. The others which I borrowed from my friends were all returned, and there is reason to believe that most of them are already heirlooms in the proud families that own them still.

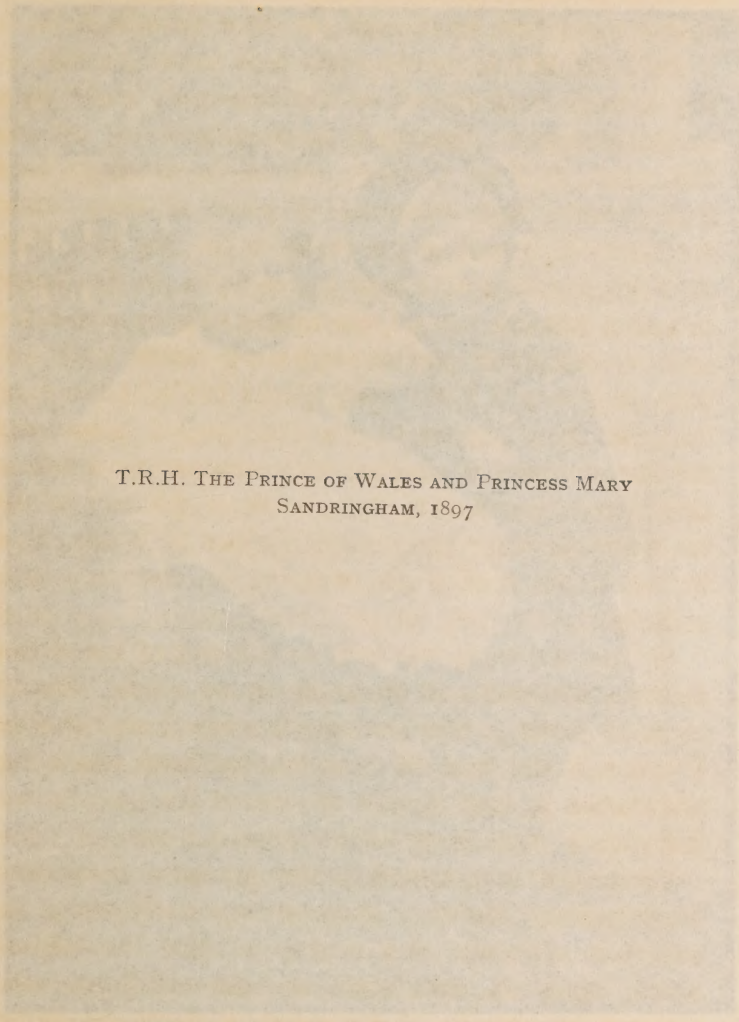
Those were great days at Sandringham when King Edward, then Prince of Wales, used to have his famous shooting parties. When I passed through one of the courtyards to the House, I remember seeing the royal beaters, who must have numbered a hundred, wearing blue smocks and black hats, and raising their horn mugs (a wonderfully mediaeval picture) to drink the health of the Queen. The same ceremony was observed in the stewards' room, and my assistant told me that the same took place in the servants' hall, where he took his meals. There is no doubt that Queen Victoria never forgot that she was the Queen Empress, and even though

she never went to Sandringham the etiquette prevailed there just as though she were present herself.

My first Royal photograph was taken in one of the conservatories used by the Prince of Wales as a smoking-room. This had been chosen by me, as the rooms at York Cottage, where the children were living, were not suitable. I have a very vivid recollection of seeing the children for the first time at York Cottage as I was going through the house to find a suitable room for a studio. They presented such a delightful picture—playing about with the present Queen. I was very glad I brought the toys, because they almost at once discarded their own for the pleasure of playing with new ones. Even in those days the Royal children were dressed in the most simple way, the present Prince of Wales, then Prince Edward of York, wearing an ordinary little sailor suit.

He, by the way, was told at the end of the sitting to come forward and shake hands with me. He did so most prettily, and I have often wondered whether I was not the first of that mighty host which has sometimes proved almost too much for his physical endurance, but never for his good nature.

That night a mounted messenger came down from Sandringham House. Imagine my excitement and nervousness when the waiter at the Dersingham Arms came up and with an air of ill-concealed interest remarked: "A messenger from the Prince has come to see you." The messenger came in and brought a letter stamped with the Royal crest from Lord Knollys (then Sir Francis Knollys) instruct-



T.R.H. The Prince of Wales and Princess Mary
Sandringham, 1897

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T.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES & PRINCESS MARY. 1897.

ing me to present myself at the House at eight o'clock on the following morning. I wondered what on earth was the matter; I had finished taking my photographs and was dreadfully afraid that my ignorance of Court etiquette had caused me to make some social blunder. No reason whatever was given for this command. The next morning, when I got there, I was received by Sir Francis in his private room. He quickly put my doubts at rest and gave me a letter to the Countess of Leicester at Holkham Hall conveying to her the Prince of Wales' suggestion that while I was in the neighbourhood I should photograph her children also.

My next experience of Royalty was at Osborne, where I found the etiquette far more rigid. I went to photograph Prince Henry of Battenberg's children: Prince Leopold, Prince Maurice, and Princess Ena (the present Queen of Spain). They were still all in the schoolroom at the time. A large saloon was selected for the purpose of photographing which, unfortunately, led from Queen Victoria's apartments. I say "unfortunately" because, after a considerable amount of time had been spent in arranging my temporary studio, and within a few minutes of the time of the appointment, a lady-in-waiting came hurriedly forward. "Mr. Speaight, you must remove these things immediately," she said. "Her Majesty is about to pass and her eye must not be offended by the room being disarranged." You can imagine my feelings. I was still so new to Royalty, and naturally anxious to make a good

impression and to take successful photographs, that I had taken considerable time in arranging and re-arranging the curtains, etc. Queen Victoria was a frightening person. I wondered for a moment whether, at least in return for my trouble, I should be permitted to catch a glimpse at close quarters of her august Majesty. But as it turned out there was no question of this. Her Majesty's eye was not to be offended by the photographer, any more than by his photographic implements, and I was rapidly ushered into an adjoining room.

After this terrifying start, the actual photography —when I was at last permitted to do it—was an easy business. It was indeed astonishing—the contrast between the stern unhumorous etiquette surrounding the Queen and the unaffected gaiety of her grandchildren.

Then within a few days of my visit to Osborne I received a command to attend at Claremont to photograph the Duchess of Albany's children.

The Duchess, who took the liveliest interest in their pictures, showed me round the house in person; asked me where I wished to take the photographs, and said that I could have anything moved that I liked, as she was very anxious for the best possible result. That was the occasion of which I did not remind Princess Alice in the presence of her daughter. It was quite a small affair really—simply that Her Royal Highness arrived in the temporary studio fresh from riding. She was still in her habit and pouted prettily, but obstinately, when she was told to change into a white party

dress. She finally did so, in the same way as her daughter after her, but was by no means so easy a sitter as she has proved in after years.

The next time I was at Claremont was in 1911, thirteen years later, and the Duchess was surrounded by her grandchildren. In the intervening years the Duke of Albany had renounced all claim to the English throne and had become a German prince. His children were visiting their grandmother and, as if she had some presentiment, the Duchess was extremely eager to take this opportunity of being photographed with them all together in a family group. I shall never forget the scene as I entered the room. There was the venerable, grey-haired figure of the Duchess, working at a silken Union Jack, while round her played the children whose parents were soon to be so widely separated by the Great War.

Referring to the photograph one cannot help noticing the anxious way in which she hugged the children to her—just as though she knew even then what was in store for them.

The photographs of the Duke of Connaught's children were taken at Bagshot, where a most amusing, though at the time extremely embarrassing situation arose. It happened like this. While I was getting my apparatus ready, Prince Arthur was ragging with his two sisters, Princess Margaret and Princess Patricia, in their neat schoolroom frocks—chaffing them, and disarranging their carefully plaited pigtails. Suddenly the two princesses decided to take vengeance on him and by superior

numbers managed to hustle him out of the room—the sort of scene that might be witnessed any day of the year in any schoolroom. For a moment there was silence, except for deep breathing while the princesses recovered their breath. Then came a heavy knock on the door. The princesses and I naturally assumed that it was Prince Arthur trying to re-enter. "You can't come in until you have apologized," they sang in triumphant unison. The knocking continued. The princesses continued their taunts gleefully. The knocking still continued, purposefully and heavily—a kind of grown-up knocking, not at all just knocking for the sake of knocking. All at once an expression of horror came over the faces of the princesses as they realized that it was not their brother who was trying to gain admittance. Panic-stricken, they moved to the door to open it, while I followed uncomfortably behind them. Yes, they were right. There was a frenzied click of the key in the lock, the door opened, and the dignifiedly indignant figure of the Duchess of Connaught entered. I shall never forget her stately progress into the room, nor the swish of her train. Her expression froze me. It was an appalling situation. Neither the princesses nor myself had any chance to explain. I never saw the Duchess again.

Another interesting group that I photographed about this time was that of the children of the Duchess of Fife, now Princess Arthur of Connaught, and Lady Maud Carnegie. My chief recollection of this occasion was the artistic talent shown by

the Princess Royal. She was most helpful to me, and to my astonishment, when I saw her in Portman Square about the proofs, I discovered what an amazing knowledge of drawing she possessed. She had greatly improved the proofs, and I learnt much from her with regard to touching up a photograph, which I have never forgotten. Her treatment of hair and draperies was especially instructive.

One of the most beautiful children whose portraits appeared in the exhibition of May, 1900, was the Hon. Maynard Greville. Lady Warwick, his mother, asked me to go down to Warwick Castle, suggesting a Saturday. On my arrival she explained charmingly that she had chosen the week-end in case I cared to drive round the country-side before returning; and each time I have since been down there a week-end has been chosen. My delight at the invitation was enhanced by a desire to meet her son, whose looks in those days were a household word. And indeed his reputation was justified. Nowhere can I remember having seen a more lovely sight than this curly-haired, blue-eyed boy being led into the great cedar hall by the wonderful Countess. At that time it would have been difficult to surpass Warwick Castle for perfect upkeep and stately dignity. As you entered the courtyard even the peacocks seemed invested with more than the usual dignity of their kind, and I shall never forget the masses of lilies-of-the-valley arranged tier upon tier the whole length of the great refectory tables. As for the Countess herself, not even the skill of the great French artist Benjamin Constant—who

painted that famous portrait of her in the black dress against the red draperies, holding a rose—could do justice to her beauty; so I thought, as turning round from contemplation of the picture, I found with a start that she was standing just beside me. Then, as now, the public were allowed at special hours to be shown over parts of the Castle, and the potted information handed out by the guides to the sightseers was punctuated by the clicks of my camera. There was only a large leather screen between us. I expect that more than one American that day would have given a good deal to have known and seen what was happening within a few feet of him.

Another stately home of England which I visited about this time was Blenheim Palace. I was sent for by the Duchess for an odd reason. It was this. Her father, Cornelius Vanderbilt, had sent the little Lord Blandford a life-size stuffed donkey, and the Duchess thought it would please her father to have his grandson photographed upon it. So, as they did not know how to transport it to London and into my studio without fuss and discomfort, they sent for me to come to Blenheim.

When I arrived the Duchess had not returned and the steward showed me round the palace. All at once I stopped. "This is the spot I should like to use," I said. The steward looked at me in astonishment. "Why here, sir?" he asked. "I don't know why exactly," I replied, "but it appeals to me." "That is a most extraordinary thing, if I may say so," said the steward, "but this was the

only spot in the whole palace where Benjamin Constant would paint Her Grace." It certainly was an odd coincidence. Blenheim is an enormous place and we had walked for some minutes before I stopped and, so it turned out, chose exactly the same spot as the great French painter.

Apropos of this visit, it would be difficult to forget the Duchess's return from Woodstock that afternoon. Her carriage was drawn by four horses, with postilions, for all the world as if it were a State coach. Certainly this regal procession contrasted strangely with my first experience of photographing outside London. My client was a dear old Early Victorian of the type that is now quite defunct. Her name was Mrs. Platt Higgins and she lived at Thinghill. When I arrived at the local station I found waiting for me a little old carriage with a coachman and footman both wearing respirators—not the army type, but little black pieces of muslin attached to the ears by elastic. Inside the carriage were hot-water bottles and a number of rugs for my especial comfort. All this because there was a slight mist. It is a shame though to joke about it. It was the most charming consideration on her part, and I have no right to make fun of it. Besides, she did not appear in the exhibition !

At this time we had an exceptionally good-looking little page-boy who took a great pride in his smart appearance. One little girl client was quite enraptured with him. Directly he opened the carriage door she seemed to take to him, and wanted him to carry her up into the studio. It was almost more

than he could manage, but the mother was anxious for him to humour the child, and asked him to do as she wished. But even this was not enough; for as soon as the page-boy had retired from the studio, all my efforts to amuse the little lady met with utter failure, and it was only by bringing him back again that we were able to get a smile on her face. The mother was so much impressed by this attachment between her small daughter and "Buttons" that she asked if he might be allowed sometimes to come round to their house in Park Street; and this he often did during the rest of that season. One day he went without his page's uniform. The child was bitterly disappointed and would have nothing to do with him. It was almost pathetic sometimes to see how happy the child and the page-boy were together, and it made one realize how lonely an only child may be even in the midst of the most luxurious surroundings.

During the season of 1900 Lady Ancaster one day called and made a suggestion which had an important bearing on my future work.

Lady Ancaster, by the way, never gave up her family barouche, and it was a grand sight to see the powdered footmen in their plush knickers and white silk stockings still maintaining the dignity of their mistress amid the flurry of the first impudent and smelly motor-cars.

"I am organizing a fête for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children," she said. "Can you help me?"

I readily agreed. My brother had often said to

me that, having had so much to do with the children of the rich, it would be nice to do something for the children of parents in less fortunate circumstances.

" What about doing souvenir photographs of the children of the organizers of the fête ? " I suggested.

This was taken up with alacrity by Lady Ancaster.

Here I must explain that the Press photographer was then unknown. There was no one to " click " at distinguished visitors whether they wanted to be photographed or not. Altogether photography was appreciated a great deal more than now. For one thing, it was far less common. On this occasion we built a studio in Regent's Park, where the fête took place. I very much doubt if anyone would bother to be photographed nowadays on such an occasion, however luxurious a studio might be prepared. But in 1900 it was a different matter, and I was busy from morning to night. Among the many children I photographed were those of Lady Dudley, Lady Dundonald, Lady Wolverton, Lady Essex, Lady Maud Warrender, the Duchess of Beaufort, and Lady Mar and Kellie.

Many of them I photographed later in Court dress and, again later some of them with their children. I am always interested in photographing the second generation, and I find that the mothers are generally anxious to know whether I think their babies are like they were at the same age.

The success of this fête at the Botanical Gardens was tremendous, and Lady Ancaster revived it annually for several years. The studio was quite remunerative and numbers of societies asked us

to give our services in a similar way. Quite the most brilliant of them all was the Imperial Coronation Bazaar on behalf of the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital.

That was in 1902. I was looking over an old programme the other day. We shall never see its equal again. The Royal German stall was—a shooting gallery! It was presided over by Princess Henry of Pless. But the concerts with Madame Kirby Lunn, Caruso, Albani, Kubelik, Plunket Green, and Ada Crossley! They were arranged by Melba and the admission was half a guinea. On the other hand, the famous Ritz (they called him Mr. Ritz), provided dinners at two guineas a head without wine.

Lady Strathcona was in charge of the Canadian stall; Princess Alexis Dolgorouki of the Russian stall; Julia, Lady Tweeddale presided over the fruit stall; the Countess of Crewe over the Italian stall; Lady Howard de Walden over the basket stall; and the Duchess of Wellington over "The Old Curiosity Shop." "Stageland" was absolutely the last on the list, although it was here that the programmes themselves were sold. "Many ladies of the theatrical profession have kindly consented to amuse" was all the notice they got in those days.

As for the souvenir stall, which Mrs. Arthur Leveson helped me to run, I may as well quote the programme:

The Souvenir of the bazaar will be unique in character, as it will consist of a most artistically bound book, entitled

"Children's Portraits" by Richard N. Speaight, and will contain portraits of the children of the Patrons and the stall-holders specially taken for the work. Only a limited edition will be printed, and it is fully expected that the demand for the book will be so great that the price, after the first day, will considerably increase. Owing to the generosity of Messrs. F. & R. Speaight, the well-known Child Photographers of 178 Regent Street, who have compiled the book at their own expense, it is expected that a sum of about £1,000 will be raised by its sale for the benefit of the bazaar. The frontispiece by special permission of Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales will consist of Prince Edward of Wales' portrait. In addition, portraits of the children of Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise, Duchess of Fife, and H.S.H the Duchess of Teck will appear.

The youngest peeress of the Realm, the Baroness Clifton of Leighton Bronswold, will on the occasion of Queen Alexandra's visit to the bazaar, offer for Her Majesty's acceptance a beautifully bound copy of the souvenir.

Some of the others who helped to sell the souvenir were the children of the Duchess of Beaufort, Lady Cooper, Lady Troubridge, the Duchess of Sutherland, the Duchess of Marlborough, and the Countess of Warwick.

The mention of the Duchess of Sutherland recalls vividly the sad difference between Stafford House at the height of her régime and the dull, prosaic, though doubtless instructive aspect of the London Museum as it now is. Gone are the brilliant lights, the magnificent flunkeys, the gay crowds, and in their place are found the silent glass cases filled with relics of a bygone age.

Some of the child sellers were far too young and inexperienced to be able to ask people to buy the souvenirs, but to my knowledge the parents of several gave them ten guineas (the souvenirs were one guinea each), which with happy faces they brought back to me.

But the youngest of my assistants at the Souvenir Stall was the Baroness Clifton. Ever since that day I have felt the deepest sympathy for nurses whenever I see them holding robust children in their arms, for I seemed to spend the whole of the first day of the bazaar carrying the little Baroness about. Little did I think that one day she would become a full-fledged barrister and probably acquire quite enough knowledge of libel to start an action against me here and now for daring to say that I once carried her about in my arms. Nevertheless it is a fact. She wore a little white muslin frock, and at the beginning it amused me to point out people to her while she, in her pretty, childish way, would lisp: "Please, Lady So-and-So, please buy a book. My picsher is inside it. Do look." She certainly had a winning way. Then up came the Chinese Ambassador in magnificently celestial robes. I said: "Ask the nice Chinaman to buy a copy." How amused His Excellency was when she piped out for all to hear: "Please, Mr. Chinaman, I want you to buy my book!" I do not suppose the Ambassador has ever been summoned by that title either before or since. He took no offence whatever and laughingly motioned to one of his suite to pay the child well for the souvenir.

Queen Alexandra, too, who attended to declare the Bazaar open, graciously accepted a copy, to the child's great delight.

Apropos of Baroness Clifton, a short time afterwards (at King Edward's coronation) I received a visit at the studio from her mother, who wished me to photograph her little girl who was then only four years old, in a complete miniature set of Peeress's robes, though, of course, she was far too young to to be present at Westminster Abbey.

Looking back on this bazaar makes me realize how hard we worked in those early days. My brother and I found that it was not possible to spare the time to go home and sleep. So we had three bell-tents rigged up in the Botanical Gardens, the third one for William Smart, who had started business with me as page-boy when I was an apprentice in the Strand, and has since worked his way up to the position of a director. We camped out in the Gardens for a whole week.

I cannot close these recollections of the Coronation Bazaar without paying tribute to the work done by my brother Fred, who as Honorary Designer was responsible for planning and directing what "The Times" described as "the most effective outdoor decoration scheme that has ever been seen."

As a result of this effort the record sum of twenty-seven thousand pounds was paid in to the funds of the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. In a letter of thanks the hospital authorities made us both Honorary Governors.

Smart, to whom reference has just been made, was

responsible for a great deal of my later success. His technical knowledge has always been invaluable. We certainly did work hard in those days. I used to arrive at the studio at about 7 a.m. always to find that breakfast was already cooked and he seldom left me before eleven at night; and even then he had prepared supper for me.

Actually the longest spell I have ever had was about twenty years ago. We had a Court on one night. The next night Lady Maitland gave a big fancy dress ball, which kept me up until four o'clock in the morning. The third night was yet another Court owing to which, as on the first night, I had no time to go to bed at all—and I ended up as best man at an old friend's wedding the following morning. Several of Lady Maitland's (now Lady Lauderdale's) guests were surprised to find me photographing them all over again in fancy dress. It seemed only a few hours before that they were being photographed in Court dress.

Fortunately, I am still possessed of a strong physique, and only once in my life have I ever collapsed while at work. That was really rather a funny business. It was on the occasion of a Court during which I was abnormally busy with appointments. Lady Cooper came in and particularly wanted me to take a number of photographs of herself and her guests at her own house in Grosvenor Square.

"I am afraid I can't possibly arrive before two," I said.

"Well, come as soon as you can."

It was long past that time before I was able to get away. All the arrangements had been made earlier in the day by one of my assistants—the fixing of the electric cables, the fitting up of a raised platform at the end of the room, and so forth. I shall never forget my entry. They had been waiting for some time and all eyes appeared to be on me. I almost rolled down the room—I was so tired—fell into a chair which had been placed for the sitters, and in a feeble voice called for a brandy and soda. I then fainted right away, and my next recollection was of finding myself on the balcony drawing in gulps of air. In a few minutes, however, I was quite myself again, carrying on with the job in hand.

Like a number of other people—'bus-men, for example—I found that my greatest relaxation was another form, a more artistic form possibly, of my usual work, and I spent any spare moment I could away from taking pictures to please my clients in taking pictures to please myself. Indeed, I had quite a number of successes; several of my child studies, nudes in particular, being hung and winning diplomas in exhibitions both in England and on the Continent. One of these, a nude study of two children aged under five, was reproduced in *Country Life*. And what do you suppose? I received a furious letter from a country clergyman to the effect that he had admired my work for years and, in consequence, was all the more horrified to note that I was using my gifts for the production of indecent pictures! I was extremely upset at the idea of anyone being able to put such a miscon-

struction on my work. I had a most distracting day, with this man's vile thoughts running through my head all the time. At last, a spare moment came to write him a reply. I even got as far as beginning "Sir" when I thought better of it and simply returned his letter to him with the words, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*" scrawled across it. Yes, those were hard days.

CHAPTER III

REMOVAL TO BOND STREET

Removal to Bond Street, 1902—Speaight, Ltd., floated—Venture justified—South American clients—Family groups—Lady Beatrice Pole-Carew and her children—The Duchess of Devonshire and her family—My marriage in 1905—Alice Langford Cundy—Marriage no hindrance to artistic work—Her studio in New Grove House—Methods with children—Prince George as sitter—Queen Mary prefers a true to a flattering portrait—Stories against myself.—A wedding hoax—Trespassing in Harley Street—Chillingham—Honesty the best policy—"Uncle Coo-Coo"—A legal story

BY this time, however, we had completely outgrown what we originally thought were spacious premises in Regent Street. Our business had increased so rapidly that all profits which could be spared had been spent in fitting up new workrooms and installing up-to-date apparatus and machines to facilitate the production of our work. Despite all this, however, it became apparent that, sooner or later, we should have to move whether we liked it or not; and then by great good fortune the Continental Galleries came into the market.

From our point of view the position was ideal, being situated in the centre of Bond Street, the world's rendezvous for art dealers and other shops *de luxe*. An inspection of the premises, however, made us realize that to make them suitable for our

business at least twenty thousand pounds would have to be spent. After discussing the matter with several of our friends and clients, we decided to form ourselves into a private company, with my brother (who was my financial partner) and myself as managing directors, and we duly floated a company with a capital of forty thousand pounds, ten thousand being preference, and thirty thousand ordinary shares, together with an issue of ten thousand 5½ per cent debentures. Only those who have been through a similar experience can realize how anxious we felt when we were waiting to see whether our clients would rally round us, and our pride in the confidence they showed by subscribing the total amount required within two days of the issue of the prospectus. That was in September, 1904.

Twenty-two years have elapsed. One has to move with the times, and once again I have been driven out from the studio by an invading army of workmen. Indeed, the five thousand pounds' worth of damage they are expected to do is largely responsible for these elusive studio memoirs. For I must be doing something to fill up the time during which the operations of builders and decorators are likely to discourage many of our clients from visiting the studio.

I have often been asked, " Which do you find the better street for business purposes—Regent Street or Bond Street ? " I have now had personal experience of both, and have no hesitation in saying that, for an artistic business, Bond Street is un-

doubtedly preferable, being, as it is, the centre of the art trade of the world.

Our venture of 1904 quickly justified itself. We had compliments showered on us from all quarters. Old friends, new clients, and the newspapers, all were unanimous in declaring that our galleries were the finest in Europe, and even Americans joined in the chorus of praise. Both Strauss and Core, two of the leading photographers in the United States, congratulated us. "Well, Mr. Speaight," said Strauss, "I am not going to discuss your work, for I believe ours is as good if not better. But as far as premises go, I am well acquainted with our principal studios all over the States, and we have none to touch these."

There is an old saying that success breeds success. I still wonder how we got through the ever-increasing volume of business. For the next few years people floated in, not only from all parts of England, but from the Continent and South America too. Our accountants told me one year that more than a quarter of our turnover came from Buenos Aires alone. Whether or not in those days South Americans had larger families I do not know. Certainly, during the season hardly a day passed without half a dozen or more of these olive-skinned, dark-eyed children appearing before my camera. There were many interesting English children too, like the Lady Lettice, the Lady Sybil, the Lady Mary, and the Hon. Hugh Lygon, Lady Beauchamp's children. And what opportunities one had with the long, flowing draperies so fashionable then! I

think that I never saw a more handsome group than that composed of Lady Beatrice Pole-Carew and her children. Her large Irish eyes, brown hair, and superb carriage made work an absolute pleasure. It was only last year that she came into my studio, this time by herself, and I could not help thinking that despite the lapse of time she was almost more beautiful than ever, with her grey hair and lustrous eyes and still perfect complexion. Indeed, I complimented her on her hair, to which she replied: "I could not bear the thought of being called an 'old hag,' a phrase that the younger generation use whenever they notice elderly people trying to hide their grey hair by dyeing it, and in other ridiculous ways trying to look young. Now, have you ever heard anyone called an 'old hag' who is growing old naturally? If you have grown-up children you cannot be young or look it, so how much better to let nature take its course." That remark impressed me a very great deal. If only every one would take her advice in this rushing, tearing, and so often undignified age!

As an example of the charm of the spacious old days one cannot do better than mention the sitting given to me by the Duchess of Devonshire and her children. She came one day in the height of the London season and said:

"I want you to reserve me a whole morning!"

Imagine that nowadays. I can assure you that it was no easy matter. I looked through my appointment book, however, and found that by waiting a fortnight we could arrange a date.

My Wife and Son
1908

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MY WIFE & SON. 1908.

"Now," she said, "I have an idea that it will be better and cause less worry to the children if they can come in one at a time. The elders will come first and the baby last, and then you can take a final group."

So it was arranged, and on the day appointed carriages were going to and fro all the morning between Devonshire House and the studio bearing the younger generation of the House of Cavendish in strict rotation from the eldest to the youngest.

Yes, those were days when people really took trouble over their photographs, and as a result photographs were more appreciated.

As I have explained, I was bold enough later on to suggest to Lord Athlone that photographers were seldom given a chance to do their best nowadays.

Those, too, were the days of attractive family groups, with children playing round the graceful folds of their mother's skirts. To-day a full length portrait of a similar scene is quite impossible with the vogue for short skirts. Children would be quite literally playing round their mothers' legs, and the effect of the children would be completely lost by the prominent part bound to be played by the maternal limbs. Sensible and sometimes charming as the modern fashion is in real life, the fact remains that from a pictorial point of view the effect is disastrous.

The year 1905 was a memorable one for me, for it was then that I married Alice Langford Cundy, the miniature painter. Our work had brought us together a year or two previously; for it had

occurred to me what a good thing it would be if I could engage an artist, not a photographic artist, but preferably a woman who was a first-class miniature painter of repute. Many of my clients had expressed a wish to have miniatures of their children and I had not been able to do justice to their request. I had, moreover, for many years admired Alice's work in the Academy, and so through a mutual friend obtained an introduction to her. Being an artist to her finger-tips, the arrangement appealed to her, I think chiefly because it enabled her to concentrate on her painting without having to worry about the financial side. I was to fix the fees ; all she had to do was to please the clients.

Well, I will not be so romantic as to suggest that it was love at first sight, but certainly, before many months were passed, I realized what she meant to me. In April we were married, and I should like to put it on record here that a happier marriage has never been made. Her artistic knowledge has done much to help me with my work, while her sympathy has done still more for me at all times.

Many people thought that marriage would almost inevitably restrict her career as an artist. They were quite mistaken, however. She set aside a portion of each day for painting, and soon found that, on the contrary, marriage brought still greater scope for the exercise of her art. And it is safe to say that no one took a greater delight in, or felt a keener admiration for, her work than myself—unless, perhaps, it was our small son, a favourite model of ours in the early days and now an under-

graduate at Merton College, Oxford. My son was certainly our youngest sitter. In his own particular album there is a picture of him at the age of five days. Other pictures show him in his christening robe and later in a Romney frock, both heirlooms in his mother's family. I also took him in one of those djibehs which his mother designed for him herself. This, I may say, as a now experienced parent, is an ideal garment for a growing child; being entirely free from buttons, strings, bands, or frills, it does not hamper his movement or distort the figure, and yet the ornamentation at the neck gives scope for the most charming colour schemes and cunning stitchery.

Like me, my wife specialized in children's portraits. "I have never regretted it," she once told an interviewer. "The beautiful simplicity of pose and expression in a child is fascinating. Next to children I like painting old ladies."

Curiously enough, though, the best miniature she ever did is, by unanimous agreement, one of my humble self, which was exhibited in the Academy in 1907 and the Paris Salon in 1908.

We were fortunate in being able to acquire New Grove House, where George du Maurier used to live, and his studio, where he drew his famous *Punch* cartoons and also wrote *Trilby*, was admirably suited for my wife's work. Here, instead of the plain, uninteresting "throne" usually provided for sitters in a studio, hers was covered with a large tiger skin and surmounted by a long, low Indian divan with quaintly painted legs. Besides the child

itself, there was room for its nurse or mother to sit there too and thus prevent the little model from becoming awed or lonely.

Again, like me, Alice used to do all she could to banish from the minds of the children who came to her the fact that they had come to be painted. Sometimes her readiness to play with them and tell them stories, although it ensured natural poses, interfered rather seriously with her work. They used to think that her note-taking and preliminary drawings were done solely for their own amusement and that they had an absolute right to direct her pencil. She had an amusing experience of this kind with Prince George when he was a child. All unconsciously he showed, in baffling all her attempts to paint him, a skill which, as she prophesied at the time, would stand him in good stead later on with the "camera fiend." Certainly he is our least photographed prince. On this occasion he watched Alice's pencil moving over the paper with the liveliest interest, and kept on asking her so winningly to draw yet another lion and yet another elephant that, when the time came for his nurse to take him away, the paper was found to be covered with a most interesting menagerie, but not many sketches of Prince George himself.

One of my wife's greatest successes was the late Dowager Marchioness of Ormonde, who was, I believe, a bridesmaid at Queen Victoria's wedding. Lady Beatrice Pole-Carew and Mrs. Alfred Duggan, now the Marchioness Curzon of Kedleston, were other clients of hers. Alice also painted miniatures

of Myrtle Farquharson and Lord Wendover. The latter was depicted in the costume he wore as a page at Lady Chesterfield's wedding. This costume was copied from the portrait of an ancestor of Lord Carrington, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and my wife, in order to secure as faithful a reproduction as possible, copied the background for her miniature from the original picture.

Mention of my wife as a portrait painter recalls the fact that she was painting Queen Mary at the time of King George's Coronation. The miniature was painted at Buckingham Palace, and the Queen, who was naturally in black (though in the picture her dress was made a soft shade of mauve), on inspecting the miniature said, " I am so pleased you have not attempted to make my mouth small, and also that you have given a natural colour to my hair. In so many paintings that I have had, they have made my hair bright golden, and the whole thing more like a picture on a chocolate box than a portrait of me."

In later chapters, dealing with our visits to foreign Courts, I shall have more to say regarding my wife's work.

Shortly after my wedding an amusing hoax was played upon me. I hope no present-day confidence tricksters will take advantage of it professionally. One evening, just before our Galleries closed for the day, a man came in with " young officer " stamped all over him. He asked to see me privately.

" I am getting married next Tuesday," he finally explained, in the seclusion of my private office,

" and my fiancée doesn't like the idea of a photographer coming specially to take pictures. On the other hand, I am rather anxious for a souvenir of the occasion. Can I persuade you to come as a guest to the wedding breakfast ? Then I can make some remark about it being such a pity that no photographer is present, and you can say that it so happens that you have a camera handy and can take the picture. But pretend to do it like an amateur, so that she won't guess."

The idea rather tickled my fancy and I finally agreed to go. Then, in rather an embarrassed way, the young man added : " I suppose it would be convenient for you to wear the—what shall I say ? — regulation wedding garments ? " As I still had the frock coat, light trousers, and so on, which I had worn at my own wedding, I assured him that my clothes would not do him any discredit. As he was leaving, he said cheerfully : " I am so glad that it is not raining as I have to walk to Dorking." I naturally expressed my astonishment that he was going to foot-slog it so many miles. " Why ever not take a train ? " I asked. " Oh, it is all my own fault," he replied. " I have been spending money so hard all day in preparation for the wedding that I quite forgot to go to my bank before closing hours." On the impulse of the moment I offered to cash a cheque for him. " Oh, you mustn't do that," he said. " I am a complete stranger to you." After a little persuasion he finally accepted three pounds in cash in exchange for his cheque.

I thought no more about it until a day or two later

I ran into a colleague—a pompous little man who always liked to imagine himself on a social level with his clients—a pose which I detest. Sure enough, he began bragging about the intimate terms on which he stood with his clients. " And next Tuesday," he boasted, " I have been invited down as a guest to a wedding, and you wouldn't believe how much they are paying for a single photograph after the ceremony is over." The story did not sound new to me. " Did you cash a cheque for your friend, by any chance ? " I asked. You should have seen how his face dropped. " Ye—es," he stammered. " Why not ? " " How much for ? " " Well, as a matter fact, ten pounds." As I had swiftly guessed, it had been arranged for him to take the same group on the same day as myself. I called on a number of prominent West End photographers whom I knew, and found that each of them had been caught in the same way, their liabilities being anything from three to ten pounds.

Fortunately, I can always see a joke against myself, and the picture of five photographers, each of them heads of firms, feeling rather conscious of their wedding attire, and each with a camera, waiting on the same platform for the same train at Waterloo has often given me a smile on the most depressing days.

I have sometimes regretted my zeal in preventing this ingenious scheme from running its natural course to the final climax. Having paid for our experience we might as well have got our money's worth in the form of laughter at each other's expense.

Another amusing experience I had just at that time occurred when the directors of Mellin's Food decided to hold a competition for the most beautiful and healthy baby in the land. It must have been one of the very first of these plagues of Egypt which have since from time to time swept across the pages of our picture papers.

Anyway, I was asked to be the judge. There were several thousand entries, and when I made my decision the names of the prize-winners, with a covering letter from myself, were published in the Press.

The result was curious.

Many young mothers got the impression that, being a specialist in children's portraits, I was, furthermore, a specialist for all their aches and pains. Several parents came to my studio and eagerly asked what I recommended, either as food or as a cure for some ailment or other from which their children were suffering. Really, it was all very difficult and embarrassing to explain that my talent, such as it was, did not lie in a medical direction. One case in particular I remember—the only occasion indeed when I actually invaded the province of Harley Street. A most anxious young mother from the country came to me, carrying her child in her arms. "Do you consider raw meat juice a good thing for rickets?" was her astonishing query. I pondered for a moment. After all, the human being is carnivorous (when it is not vegetarian) and there could not be anything much wrong with blood *qua* blood, or rather gravy *qua* gravy. "Well, madam," I replied in a most guarded manner,

" as far as my experience goes, I don't think it can do any harm. Anyhow, it is good for the complexion. But remember," I added solemnly, " it must be in moderation." " Thank you," she said. " I think I will try it." One thing adds zest to the existence of a photographer—he never knows who will be his next client. While on my holidays in North Wales in the autumn of 1905 I received a letter from Lady Tankerville, who before her marriage was the beautiful Miss Van Marter. Lady Tankerville is one of those charming Americans who combine all the grace and artistic instincts of the Italians (for a great deal of her life was spent in Italy) with the practical sense and thoughtfulness of her own race. In her letter she informed me that she had called at my studio, and hearing I was on my holidays wondered whether I could be induced to spend a portion of them at their place in Northumberland, that was if I did not mind combining business with what she hoped might be pleasure.

Having read of Chillingham Castle and the famous herd of wild cattle—the only one, I believe, Great Britain possesses—I gladly seized the opportunity of spending a portion of my holidays there in Northumberland ; for it appeared not only interesting but a paying proposition.

At that time Chillingham Castle was let to Sir Andrew Noble, and the Tankervilles were living in a charming hunting box, Thornington House, Mindrum, about ten miles from the castle. One morning after breakfast, Lord Tankerville turned

to me: "I am sorry," he said, "we shall have to be absent most of the day, as we have promised to go to a neighbouring village to open a cottage hospital. How would you like to amuse yourself?" He then suggested shooting, but as my experience with a gun was only that of a miniature range, I thought it well to decline. His next idea was salmon fishing, but the only fishing I had done was a little sea fishing. Again I made some excuse; he waited for a moment and then said: "I know. I am sure you would be interested in seeing our wild cattle, and it would be a delightful drive over to Chillingham. You need have no qualms about the cattle as you will be in the keeper's cart when you get there. You will be perfectly safe."

I certainly thought I had made quite safe plans for the day, but my suspicions were quickly aroused when the footman came to my room and informed me that the phaeton was ready. On descending to the front terrace I saw a pair of prancing horses wildly pawing the ground and being held by a small "tiger." I quickly grasped the situation, but not the reins which he was just about to hand over to me. I asked him who was going to drive. The "tiger" replied, "You sir." "Nothing doing," was my reply. "I am not going to be responsible for these horses, so please find someone who will relieve me of all anxiety." Glad I was that I had made the stipulation. Driving along one of the country lanes we came across a motor and the groom had all his work cut out to keep the maddened animals in order.

When we reached the grounds of Chillingham Castle I exchanged my seat in the phaeton for that of a cumbersome farm-cart, driven by a delightful old gillie, who had the supervision of the wild cattle. After a short drive we came in sight of the so-called wild cattle, their wildness chiefly consisting in trying to get away from you. The old gillie was used to them, however, and after a time we drew close enough to them for me to see what beautiful beasts they were: white with long shaggy hair, something like a cross between a yak and a buffalo. After that I had my first and only experience of deer stalking, a pastime which American millionaires are so fond of nowadays. On that occasion I was more anxious about my trousers than about anything else, and I would advise people to dress more suitably than I did. Nothing spoils one's clothes so much as an endless crawl over rough ground.

That evening at dinner I made a confession as to my reasons for not having accepted either the shooting or salmon fishing, and told them how I would only have got out of the frying-pan to fall into the fire had I been brave enough to drive. The story caused a good deal of amusement, and I think my frankness was appreciated.

One afternoon in the height of the season a lady came into the studio holding by the hand a little boy of about four years of age. From the embarrassed look on the lady's countenance and the tear-stained face of the child it was not difficult to see that there had been some trouble. The lady said to my manageress, "I am so sorry to trouble you, but I

did not know what to do with my grandson. As soon as we reached your door he shouted, " I must see Uncle Coo-Coo ! I must see Uncle Coo-Coo ! " I was afraid he might go into hysterics, so I had no alternative but to stop the carriage and bring him in. Can you please explain what he means by ' Uncle Coo-Coo ' ? " " Oh," said my manageress, " it is Mr. Speaight he wants." " But who is Uncle Coo-Coo ? " " Well, Mr. Speaight is disengaged, so if you will come up to the studio you will see for yourself."

Arriving at the studio door the little boy called at the top of his voice, " Uncle Coo-Coo ! Uncle Coo-Coo ! " and I shall never forget the look of blank astonishment on the lady's face when the little chap wrenched himself free and rushed towards me, calling, " Uncle Coo-Coo, please show me your Coo-Coo clock." I realized at once what he wanted, and fetched my cuckoo clock for him. When his grandmother understood the cause of all the trouble she was profuse in apologies for having disturbed me. But personally I looked upon it as a compliment that the little boy had not forgotten me. He was very soon pacified and went away with his granny quite happy.

Leading lights of the legal profession are as prone as other folk to make ridiculous mistakes. For instance, we often hear of errors they have made in the drafting of their own wills. An amusing incident arising out of a mistake on the part of an eminent firm of lawyers once happened to me.

I had been doing a considerable amount of work

for the late Lord Curzon. Among other items was an oil painting, and in consequence of a dispute regarding payment for it I was obliged to place the matter in the hands of my solicitors. After a good deal of correspondence Lord Curzon's solicitors wrote to the effect that we had not kept to our agreement. They pointed out that I had promised that the painting would be done by an exhibitor at the Royal Academy. They said they had searched through the catalogues for several years and were unable to trace the name of "Rail" in any of the lists of exhibitors. Ultimately it transpired that they had misread one of our letters, which was worded as follows:

> We have to-day forwarded the Oil Painting by rail, which we trust will arrive safely and give every satisfaction.

Apparently the typist had inadvertently used a capital R for the word 'rail,' and they had taken it to be the name of the artist!

CHAPTER IV

VISIT TO THE GERMAN COURT

Journey to Berlin—Difficulties with Customs—Magical effect of Kaiser's name—Berlin *en fête*—Arrival at Potsdam—Unfavourable conditions for work—My wife as peacemaker—The Crown Princess—Agreeable surprise—Her Imperial Highness accompanies me in a search for a more suitable *mise en scène*—The end of the quest—Simplicity gains the day—Little Prince Wilhelm—The ruling passion—The "goose-step" acts as charm.

THEN came an important event for me—my first visit to a foreign Court. After a lengthy correspondence with the German Embassy it was finally arranged that I should go to photograph the children of the Crown Prince at Potsdam.

As in 1896, I rushed round collecting all the most amusing toys on which I could lay hands—dolls and teddy-bears, toy soldiers and that old friend Harry Lauder. I do not mean that I took that Scottish humorist himself. It was merely his effigy.

I knew little or nothing of Germany except for an odd experience a few months before, when Lady Londonderry, Lady Ormonde, Lady Lansdowne, and Georgina Countess of Dudley had been on a visit to Kiel and had admired the material of which the Kaiser's uniform had been made. "If you like it so much," the Kaiser had replied, "I promise to give you some of the material on condition that you have dresses made from it, and, too, you promise

to send me a group photograph of all four of you taken taken together in them."

They naturally accepted, and here they came, each at an interval of a day or two, in dresses made from the famous field-grey. The Kaiser's was certainly a lovely material—surface cloth, to be exact. The dresses were all made exactly alike, with peaked yachting caps to match. As each of the quartet, however, was an extremely busy woman, they never found it possible to come to me at the same time. So it was necessary for me, in order to conform with His Imperial Majesty's desire, to fake a group photograph. The Kaiser, as far as I know, never discovered that he had been disobeyed, and thus, years before the war, was under at least one more misapprehension, besides the more serious ones that the Irish trouble would prevent England coming into the war, and that, in any case, the Dominions would not aid her until it was all over, with the autumn leaves saluting his dictation of peace terms in Paris!

To continue, though, I had a comical journey to Berlin. At the frontier every one was turned out of the train while the rather arrogant Customs House officers ruthlessly and conscientiously ransacked one's belongings on the windy platform. As usual, when I was travelling, I took with me a large, brown deal box, fastened with iron bands and padlocks, containing a landscape background—so fashionable twenty years ago. Also, of course, there was a trunk full of photographic plates and all the rest of my apparatus. Up came Customs

officers brusquely demanding to see the inside of my baggage. They searched through my ordinary luggage first without any protest on my part, but when they started fiddling about with my landscape box and the photographic plates, despite my telling them that there was nothing contraband concealed there, I became extremely angry. Perhaps they thought I was a spy. At any rate, they smiled cynically at my explanation of the contents of the deal box—imagining it, as I realized afterwards, to be maps. What they thought was on the photographic plates I do not know. They began to insist, though, on going to the stationmaster's office and pulling down the blinds to test them.

"Enough of this," I bellowed in poisonous German, and showed them my correspondence bearing the Imperial Crown. The result was ludicrous. These great, stiff, gold-braided Customs officers simply wilted. They apologized, they appealed for my clemency, they hurried off trying to roll up tidily the landscape which billowed madly in the fresh breeze blowing at the time, while I sat, a picture of indignation, on an upturned trunk and haughtily refused to assist them. They strapped up my trunks—the stationmaster in person helping—and carried them bareheaded in procession back to my carriage. The stationmaster then headed a little deputation to me. I could not understand a word of it, but from the way they clicked their heels, bowed low from the waist up, and from the harassed expressions on their faces, it was perfectly clear that they were in deadly terror

that I would report their conduct at the Imperial Palace.

Berlin, on my arrival, was *en fête*. The Kaiser's daughter was just about to be married, and I have never seen a more majestic spectacle than the "Unter den Linden." Whatever you may say about the Germans, they certainly know how to organize on a large scale. Instead of flimsy posts and bits of bunting, which were all that was used at the wedding of Princess Mary, there was a magnificently designed scheme of decoration for every street in the city, whether on the route or off it. The Black and Gold Eagles fluttered proudly from a forest of tall, red flagstaffs specially erected for the occasion. Enormous garlands of evergreens were draped from every available edifice. The Kaiser's daughter was being married, and no one was allowed to forget it. Except, of course, for the Embassies, not a single flag bearing other than the Imperial Arms was to be seen. What a contrast to the hundreds of meaningless little flags of all nationalities that flutter down Bond Street or anywhere on a gala day in London!

In all the restaurants you were confronted by tall officers in blazing full-dress uniforms. And there was no doubt about junior officers jumping up smartly whenever a senior officer entered, and standing rigidly at attention until he had sat down. At the Adlon Hotel, everywhere you looked you saw portraits of the Kaiser. Nor were they the cheap oleographs and Christmas-cracker-like reproductions that would be brought out on similar occasions in

England. No, they were fine, valuable, excellently executed portraits in oils of His Imperial Majesty.

Berlin was certainly gay. But I had not come to toast the health of the marriage couple, and I left next day for the "Marmor Palais" at Potsdam. On my arrival—accompanied by a great deal of red tape and heel clicking—I was shown into a drawing-room and informed that it was arranged for me to take the photographs there. I had not been in the habit of being dictated to as to where I should work, and expressed surprise at not being given my usual freedom of choosing the site for the temporary studio. My wife, who was with me, however, remarked with her usual tact: "It's no good being cross, dear. Mr. Speaight in England is a very different person from Mr. Speaight in Germany. Now make the best of it, because if you get in this funny temper your work will suffer." I saw her point, and, taking her advice, with leaden heart prepared to get my apparatus ready for the arrival of the Crown Princess.

For it was a hideous room—a drawing-room to be exact—over-decorated, overcrowded, and, incidentally, facing south. I was not looking forward to the sitting at all. The general surroundings and the treatment I had received since my arrival in Germany had not put me at my ease. This was bad. I am a very temperamental, highly-strung person, and can't give of my best when irritated.

But all went well, and I shall never forget my impression of the Princess as she entered the room. I do not know why, but I had expected somehow to

see a short, florid, flurried, overdressed blonde. Imagine my surprise when I was confronted by a tall, dark, slim, beautifully gowned woman addressing me in the most perfect English. When I am interested in my work or my sitter I am hardly conscious of my actions or remarks. I should not have known to this day, if my wife had not reminded me laughingly later, that after the usual polite salutations, I turned to the Princess and said: "Madam, I love your dress. It is so different from what I expected." To which the Princess replied pleasantly and eagerly: "What did you expect? I always dress in Paris." But this I do remember, without any wifely promptings, that after we had been working for a few minutes the Princess stopped me for a moment and asked me graciously if there were anything wrong. There was indeed. I said: "Yes, Your Imperial Highness. I don't like the room at all, if I may say so." "What's the matter with it, Mr. Speaight?" As a matter of fact I believe there was something approaching tears in my eyes as I replied: "I want so much to please you, and I can't do it here; they gave me no choice." My pathetic outburst quite went to her heart apparently, and she replied: "What nonsense. Come with me and I will show you over the Palace so that you can choose your own spot." I thanked her from the bottom of my heart and with lightened steps I followed her out.

We went into room after room and I tactfully said nothing. There was nothing to be said. Each was more impossible than the last, both in furniture

and suitability for photographic purposes. We traversed the whole Palace in this way, I growing more uncomfortable at every step we took, realizing that I was taking up the Princess's time. It looked as though, after all, we would have to go back to the original room, which would have made me look extremely silly and have prevented any chances for a decent series of photographs materializing. Finally, on the way back we passed along the corridor leading to the servants' quarters. Here, at last, I realized was the ideal north light for which I was looking and incidentally none of the dreadful furniture that cluttered all the living-rooms. I screwed up courage.

" Your Imperial Highness," I stammered, " would it be too much to ask you to sit here in the corridor ? The surroundings will not show."

Imagine asking the Crown Princess of Germany to sit in the servants' quarters and there photograph her at the time when caste was never higher in that most snobbish of all Courts ! Her reply was delightful.

" Mr. Speaight," she said, with a charming smile, " if it is not too much trouble for you to come all the way from London to photograph me, it is surely not too much trouble for me to walk across the Palace to be photographed in this corridor."

But then her mother was a Russian Grand Duchess !

You can, however, imagine the horror of the ladies-in-waiting and, in fact, all the Imperial household at seeing the Crown Princess being seemingly

H.I.H. The German Crown Princess
and
H.R.H. Prince Wilhelm of Prussia
Potsdam, 1908

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so inconvenienced. You can imagine, too, the fuss with which the cameras and the landscape and all my apparatus were gingerly carried from one side of the Palace to the other. Actually, the Princess lent a hand herself with one of the cases.

But it seemed as if trouble were determined to dog me all that day. After I had taken one or two pictures of the Princess alone, the children came in, followed by nurses and more ladies in attendance. One or two groups were taken, and in my usual way I was endeavouring to amuse the little princes with my mechanical toys. It was a great relief to find them also understanding English, but while my antics to entertain the children caused the ladies-in-waiting to giggle incessantly—protect me from a German giggle !—the children were not the least bit entertained. I would crawl along the floor and pretend to be a grizzly bear ; I would cover my back with a rug and pretend that I was an elephant and the rug a Rajah's howdah. But all to no purpose. The only result, as I say, was that the ladies-in-waiting kept up a rapid cross-fire of irritating comment and apparently jeering remarks at my expense. This so annoyed me—my wife says I have an abominable temper if anything distracts me at my work—that I abruptly stopped my romping, rose from the floor, dusted my knees, and approached the Princess : " Your Imperial Highness," I said, " I do wish you would ask these ladies to stop chattering. I can't get on at all with them talking like that." Once again the Princess was gracious to me. " Yes," she said, " it would be far better

if we were alone," and with a wave of her hand dismissed the suddenly silenced ladies-in-waiting.

Still my woes were not at an end. Even Harry Lauder in his kilts failed to raise a laugh from the children. They regarded him solemnly and incuriously. When I tried to get them to pose, they somehow just failed each time to behave as I wanted them to. There was none of that friendly contact between us that is so absolutely essential to secure, at whatever cost, before a successful photograph can be taken. I was at my wits' end to make them look normal. Little Prince Wilhelm—a wonderfully fine boy in other ways—was utterly intractable. He just would not do what I told him or enter into the spirit of the thing at all. At last the Princess interrupted, and in her charming voice said: "You know, Mr. Speaight, though your toys amuse the children to a certain extent, you will never get them to obey you until you treat them as soldiers. They are brought up entirely, I am afraid, in a spirit of military discipline. They only think in terms of drilling and war. Play at soldiers with them."

Why had I not thought of that before! But then I hardly knew what "form fours" meant. I had heard of it of course, though later on, when I was a volunteer during the war, I understood it well enough. On my way out to Potsdam, too, I had seen a battalion of Prussian Guards performing the "goose-step." So the first thing I attempted, with a stick on my shoulders to represent a rifle, was this ludicrous march in my desire to please the Royal

Princes. It demands, of course, an extremely difficult feat of balancing—even the Guards' slow march is not easy, they tell me—and I failed utterly. I had to grin myself; the Princess valiantly concealed a smile, while her son laughed almost rudely. But it was a laugh, and that was all I wanted. Then he and I marched up and down the corridor: "Left, left, left, right, left," I commanded. "Halt! 'shun, turn to your left. Pick up those feet," and all the rest of it. At last we had made friends—I, the London photographer, and he, the Prince who, every one thought, would one day lead the Imperial might of Germany. And the photographs were a great success.

I may have dwelt at too great length on this first visit of mine to a Foreign Court—greater than the occasion demands. But I shall never forget, and am glad to record, the kind consideration shown to me by that pathetic figure who had so much trouble thrown upon her slender shoulders in later life.

CHAPTER V

VISIT TO THE SPANISH COURT

Visit to Madrid—Spanish Royal Palace—Rigid etiquette—The Queen of Spain—A Royal maze—Companions in misfortune—An embarrassing moment—Under the microscope—A Spanish Princess—Prince Louis of Bavaria in undress—Her Royal Highness the Infanta Donna Louisa and her children—English cult in Spain—Our homeward journey—Catastrophe at Biarritz—Prince Maurice's double—The Prince and the photographer—"A passage perilous maketh a port pleasant."

HARDLY had I made up my arrears of work caused by the visit to Germany when I received a letter from the secretary of the Queen of Spain arranging for me to go to Madrid to photograph Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal children. A few days later I received a telegram bidding me come at once. Unless you have had actual experience, it is difficult to realize the amount of preparation required by a photographer for a visit to a foreign Court. Not only did I take my cameras and glass plates (films not then being obtainable), which were exceedingly heavy and cumbersome, I also took a number of other studio accessories. Even then, as it turned out, I left the most important part of my equipment behind. Moreover, after my experience with the Customs on my German visit I obtained—as I always do nowadays on the occasion of a visit abroad—a letter to the Customs officers from the particular Ambassador

attached to the Court of St. James. At last we started—my wife, as usual, accompanying me. It was a long enough journey, right across France, and the remaining five hundred miles or so to Madrid—quite my longest trip up to then—seemed simply interminable, in spite of the Sud Express. Moreover, it was extremely cold. In due course, however, we arrived at the Spanish capital, and stayed at what was then considered to be the best hotel on the Puerta del Sol. It left much to be desired, but since then the Hôtel Ritz and the Savoy have been built specially to meet the needs of English people.

The first morning after our arrival I called at the Palace and saw Señor Torres, Private Secretary to the Queen. He and the English nurses were about the only people at the Palace who could speak my mother tongue. I was then shown over the Palace and selected the Long Gallery. I might point out here that palaces are extremely difficult places in which to find suitable spots for photographs, as all the principal rooms naturally face south. Fortunately, the Spanish Palace—a magnificent white structure with a glorious façade—is built round four sides of a courtyard, so the search for a good place did not take long.

The Spanish Royal Palace is the most stately I have ever seen. Its immense size from outside and the succession of vast gilded rooms inside quite dazed one. But what a job it would have been to get in unless accompanied by an official! One could not help wondering whether the soldiers dotted every few feet in the courtyard and throughout the

corridors were not put there for the very definite purpose of preventing anything from happening to their Majesties. In England, fortunately, the sentries outside Buckingham Palace and York House are kept there more as a symbol than an actual protection. But these in Madrid—why, even on their wedding day anarchists had tried to murder the Queen and King as they were coming back from the church, and the Queen's wedding dress was splashed with blood from one of the carriage horses killed by the exploding bombs! Even in Berlin Court etiquette was never more rigid. Actually, there were never more than two arm-chairs in any of the rooms. These were for their Majesties; their subjects had to sit bolt upright on stools.

The Household Guard rather gave me the impression of a stage setting in their big Napoleonic hats, black coats, and white breeches, as they paced up and down the corridors swinging their long staves or standing motionless outside the various doors.

Moreover, when any member of the Royal Family left a room and proceeded through the Palace a shout went up, and at once the band, which seemed permanently in attendance in the courtyard below, loudly and patriotically played the Spanish National Anthem.

An interesting *objet d'art* which I noticed on my way through the Palace was a bust of Her Majesty which was given to the King of Spain by eight English women of title. It had originally been sent to the Royal Academy for exhibition, but was calmly rejected by the hypercritical Hanging Committee.

A great to-do followed, and it was afterwards accepted by, I believe, the express wish of King Edward. I am not an authority on sculpture, but to me it seemed quite a fine piece of work.

As we were leaving the Palace, Señor Torres stopped for a moment, looked me carefully up and down, and said, " You will just have time to go home, change, and have lunch." My face fell. " Why, must I change ? " I asked, for I was wearing a brand-new and (to my way of thinking) extremely smart blue suit. " But of course," was the reply, " you must change into a morning coat and silk hat before having audience with Her Majesty."

There was nothing to be done. A Spanish ready-made coat, even had it been procurable at an hour's notice, was an intolerable thought. " I'm afraid I have got nothing else," I said. " Her Majesty will have to excuse me.' From that day onwards, though, I have never gone to a foreign Court without taking the whole sartorial regalia with me.

The audience was arranged for two o'clock. I do not know whether Her Majesty noticed my lack of respect with regard to my garments. She must have done so, I suppose; but she was far too great a lady to comment on it. She was indeed most courteous, and showed me over her own private apartments. These were quite English in every detail, contrasting strongly with the Spanish magnificence of the rest of the Palace. Her mantelpiece in particular was covered with photographs of English Royalty, showing—as her frequent visits to this country do to this day—that she has never forgotten her native

land and regards it indeed with as great affection as Spain itself.

Her Majesty and I then visited the Long Gallery, and I pointed out to her where I wanted, with her permission, to take the photographs. This gallery runs right round the Palace, one side leading to the State and private apartments and the other side, which is all glass and gave an ideal light for the taking of the photographs, overlooking the central and private courtyards of the Palace. On State occasions the gallery is hung with the most priceless tapestry and is used as a processional route for the Royal Family. The stone floor was covered at my request with a Spanish carpet of fine design and the temporary walls of the studio were draped in rich red damask.

When the Queen retired I escorted her back to her private apartments—a most difficult feat. There were hundreds of doors, or so it seemed—to pass, and being in the presence of Royalty, I had to walk behind my companion between points, so to speak. Just try walking behind anyone, then jumping forward to open a continuous succession of doors ahead, then jumping back to let your companion pass, then closing the door gently behind and hurrying on again to open the next. The long and the short of it was that I became so engrossed in this continual opening and shutting of doors for the Queen that my sense of topography, usually quite keen, left me completely. As a result, when the Queen graciously bowed, giving me permission to retire, I found I had completely lost my way, and

this being the sanctum of sanctums there was just no one to be seen at all anywhere who could help me out of my difficulty. As at Versailles and most other palaces, the rooms led one into the other, and I kept finding myself in the same rooms after I had thought I had left them far behind. This went on for about ten minutes, until finally, in one of the central State chambers, I saw Prince Maurice of Battenberg, the Queen's brother, walking uncertainly in the other direction. I had photographed him years before at Osborne. I hurried after him. "Excuse me, sir," I said as soon as I caught him up, "can you tell me the way out of the Palace? I have been silly enough to lose my way, I am afraid." To my surprise, he burst out laughing. "What," he said, "are you lost, too? Why, so am I. My sister's Palace must be a maze. Let's try and find our way out together." Two heads are better than one, and after several minutes we finally escaped together.

On arrival at the Long Gallery next day I found everything in readiness for the sitting. All my requests to make the temporary studio as complete as possible had beeen carried out. I had been given permission to choose whatever furniture I wanted from anywhere in the Palace and so was able to amass the choicest possible collection. It was probably the finest and most perfectly furnished studio that has ever been put together.

Princess Beatrice (then Princess Henry of Battenberg), together with the mother of the King of Spain, watched the photographing. My wife had brought one or two of her miniatures with her. I

also had brought some specimens of my work, as I always do on these occasions. This time, I remember, I had brought photographs of the Crown Princess of Sweden and her children, also the new pictures of the Crown Princess of Germany and her children. " Surely," said Princess Henry, " you are the same Mr. Speaight who photographed Her Majesty years ago at Osborne ? " A moment later she was looking at the miniatures my wife had brought. " That is a speaking likeness," she said, when shown the miniature of Prince George, which had taken Alice such a long time to achieve. Then came an embarrassing moment. The stately Dowager Queen of Spain, looking through the collection, came across the one depicting the writer of these reminiscences. " Surely this is your husband," she exclaimed ; then, turning abruptly towards me, " Young man," she said, with all the regal tone of command that you would expect from the woman who had, practically unassisted, guided the entire destinies of Spain throughout the minority of the present King, " go and stand over there, with your face to the light." I hastily obeyed and then endured the most uncomfortable two minutes of my life, while two Queens and the Princess, to say nothing of the Hon. Minnie Cochrane, who was also there, discussed the similarity between myself and the miniature. First they looked at me, then back at the miniature over which they bent to look again. One of them—I think it was Princess Beatrice—said, " Yes, she has caught his expression exactly." The Queen of Spain admired the treatment of my hair, while the Dowager

Queen confined herself to gazing at me piercingly through her heavy lorgnettes, for what seemed to be hours and hours. Can you blame me for feeling self-conscious ?

Years after Arthur Cope, R.A., came into my studio and picked up the same miniature. " What do you think of it ? " I asked. He gazed at it long and hard and made no reply. I repeated my question. " If you want to know," he said with emphasis, " I was thinking that it was a good thing for a lot of portrait painters that your wife only paints in miniature."

While their Majesties were looking at the miniatures in came the children. The two little Princes were wearing fine lace dresses with pale blue tie-ups and blue sashes—typically English, as were their nurses also in their grey uniforms. The Queen herself was wearing a beautiful white satin dress, richly embroidered in white silk. Her jewels were superb. They consisted of a glorious string of pearls, a large diamond clasp, turquoise and diamond earrings, and a turquoise and diamond brooch. The elder of the two little Princes was a most engaging child. Although under three years of age, he gave me a baby military salute. Throughout the time I was there he showed the liveliest interest in the mechanical toys I had brought over from England to amuse him ; the cuckoo clock was his favourite, and after playing with the toys for a few minutes he would always remark, " Some more cuckoo, please."

Once again—so my wife told me afterwards—I forgot all about everything except my work, and

when, after I had taken a number of groups of the Queen with her children, Her Majesty suggested that I should take some of the children alone. I said, in my anxiety to give only of my best, "Do you mind? I am feeling very tired, Your Majesty. Would it be possible to wait until to-morrow?" Her Majesty graciously assented, and once more, next day, I completely forgot where I was in my efforts to produce the best results; for the children—the Prince of the Asturias and Don Jaime they were—appeared first on the scene with their nurses, and I was so engrossed in giving them "some more cuckoo" that I completely failed to notice the entry of the Queen a moment later. As my wife told me afterwards, the nurses naturally sprang up and remained standing most respectfully; while I remained seated on the floor with my back to Her Majesty.

The following day, quite unexpectedly, I received a message from the King's sister, the Infanta Maria Teresa, desiring me to call at her palace the same afternoon. The Queen or the Queen-Mother had evidently been talking about us, for the Infanta also requested to see the miniatures that my wife had painted, and made a great point of her own son, Prince Don Luis of Bavaria, being painted by Alice, with a special request that due prominence should be given to the colour of his hair.

The Palace was smaller than, but at least as exquisite as, that of the King. There was a complete absence of formality, however, and having chosen the room my wife and I awaited Her Royal Highness.

A minute or two later a pleasant-looking woman of about thirty-five, in a drab blouse and skirt, entered with a baby in her arms. I was immediately at a loss how to address her. I did not think she was a nurse; on the other hand, she wore no jewellery, and my vivid recollections of the previous day had naturally led me to expect a great deal of pomp at the entry of the King's sister. No one else came in. We conversed for a minute or two and I began to arrange my apparatus. "Who is she, do you think?" I whispered to my wife as I leant over the camera. "Well," was the doubtful reply, "I don't think it's a nurse." So I compromised by calling the fair unknown "Madam," carefully avoiding the prefix "Your Royal Highness." However, the more I looked at her features, the more I thought I could distinguish a resemblance to the King of Spain. But when my eye wandered down over her extremely simple costume I thought it must just be my imagination. It was not until half-way through the sitting that Prince Luis suddenly piped out "Mother," or, rather, "Madre," and I realized who she was. This, as it turned out, was just as well for all concerned.

The child was dressed in positively the most inartistic-looking frock it has ever been my misfortune to be supposed to put on photographic record. It was all bunched up at the neck and sagged badly over the legs. Yet I could just see that he had shapely limbs, half concealed though they were by the ugly folds of the dress, and so I did what I would not have dared to do with Royalty even in

my most unconscious moments. I briefly suggested that the child would look better if it had less clothes on, and without more ado motioned to my wife to start to remove the outer layer, despite the mild protests of (as it later appeared) the Infanta herself. Whereupon Prince Luis of Bavaria was forthwith photographed in nothing more than a petticoat; even this was unattractive enough, but it was not nearly so bad as the frock itself.

When the sitting was over the Princess asked whether I had yet photographed the Infanta Don Carlos and her children. I replied that I had not yet had the honour, and the Princess most kindly offered to suggest that I should be favoured with a sitting.

Meantime it had been arranged for me to photograph Her Royal Highness the Infanta Donna Luisa Francisca and her children the Princes Don Alfonso Maria and Don Carlos Maria Fernando of Bourbon, and also the Princess Donna Isabel Maria de Mercedes Teresa. This was done in groups and also separately. From what I gathered in conversation, it seemed that they had all been talking about my English methods of photography, which were then quite unknown in Spain. I was incidentally extremely fortunate in visiting Spain when I did. The Spanish Royalty are the most exclusive in the world and much of the kind attention showered upon me was due to the fact that at that time everything English had just suddenly become popular; for the Queen's English upbringing was at last being felt outside the Palace.

The tea-shops were just beginning to sell and advertise English tea and toast in the afternoon,

instead of the usual national beverages. Everything that could be advertised as English was so designated —" English hats," " English tailors," and " English spoken " greeted the eye everywhere.

Within a few days I had photographed every Royal child in Spain—and there were quite a number. After my last sitting the Don Carlos children, who were bigger than the others, helped me pack my apparatus, having previously enticed me into joining them in a most entertaining game of skittles—not, however, with my cameras. My visit to Spain had turned out so successfully that I might have stayed on indefinitely, but the trouble was that I could get no more plates to fit my camera, the continental ones being unfortunately of a different size and shape. The very last night of all, when we were packing at the hotel, a note came from the Duchess San Carlos asking me to call at her palace. Apparently the Queen had been talking to her about my work, and she seemed quite disappointed when I explained that I had used up the last of my mountain of plates. It seems conceited to say so, but we were positively the rage in Madrid during our last few days, and I shall never forget the welcome and kindliness extended to us by Her Majesty and indeed by the whole of the Spanish Royal Family.

But before I close this chapter I must tell of our adventurous journey back to England—part of it nearly tragedy, part of it unpleasantly real comedy.

After so much hard work we decided to take a few days' rest on our way back, and Biarritz being the most natural place, we broke our journey there. I

may mention here that in spite of the encumbrance they caused, I always carried my camera plates myself, never trusting them to be registered. On this occasion we had more to carry than ever, for on the last Sunday in Madrid Alice and I had gone to the Rag Fair. This is a kind of glorified Petticoat Lane, where, in those days at any rate, you could buy the most marvellous antiques at ridiculously cheap prices. Brass has always attracted me, and in my excitement I bought seven different heavy brass inkstands. These looked like cruets with the pepperette for the sand, and though I have had many amusing adventures in antique shops in England, none could compare with the fun of bartering over these open-air stalls in an entirely unknown language. We also bought a number of old Spanish lamps to bring back to our friends, completely forgetting in our collector's enthusiasm that we had nowhere to pack them. At the last minute, therefore, I simply made a bundle, wrapping them up in my studio draperies and carrying them under my arm. As a result I was heavily overladen, and when we reached the station at Biarritz gladly handed the antiques to a porter. The cases I carried myself. They were a tremendous weight; however, the barrier was a long way away, and the porter made several attempts to wrest them from my arms whilst I tried to keep him off by explaining "*Très fragile*" in my best French. He still continued to make a song and dance about it, as most continental porters do on such occasions, and finally, in order to stop his profuse chattering, which I did not pretend to understand, I let him put

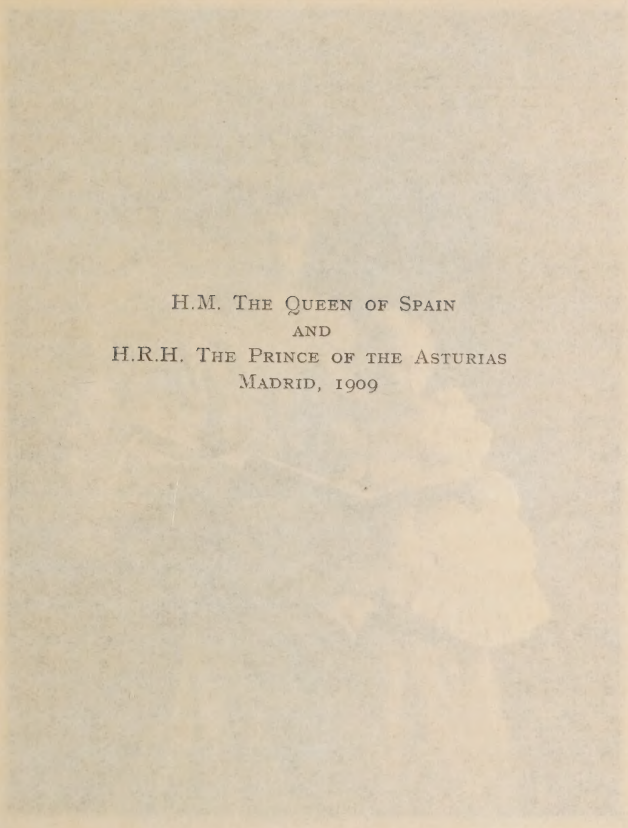
the cases on the trolley. Hardly had I done so when he bumped into a pile of trunks and, to my absolute horror, I saw the case containing the Royal plates—the fruit of days and days of the most strenuous work—bumping over and over actually on to the line. Well, there was nothing to be done except to hope for the best. I suppose it would have been wiser to have examined them there and then at the hotel. But I must be a coward. I did not want to know the worst, and foolishly refused to look at them. It was one of the most tragic experiences I remember, for what on earth could I have done if they were smashed, as some of them were bound to be? It really looked as though my whole Spanish visit had been a complete failure. I would not have dared go back, and, besides, I had no more plates. If they were smashed I could do nothing about it, I argued, with the best attempt at philosophy I could muster. So they remained unopened throughout our stay at Biarritz, of which, as you may imagine, I can recollect nothing, so harassed was I by anxiety. We had intended to remain a week, but after three days I could bear the suspense no longer, and we booked our seats for the homeward journey. When we reached London I rushed straight to my studio, and you can imagine my relief on finding that only one was cracked, and that a duplicate.

On our arrival at the Gare du Nord we noticed nearly a dozen silk-hatted officials waiting about on the platform and looking at their watches—the train being due to start. "I believe we are going to be honoured by Royalty on the train," I said to my

wife, " and it looks as though the carriage next to us is reserved for them." Sure enough Prince Maurice of Battenberg arrived a few minutes later.

By an odd coincidence he was wearing exactly the same clothes as myself—a blue lounge suit, a long light ulster, and a brown soft hat. I had no wish to look as though I were seeking his company, but a few minutes later mine was literally thrust upon him. I had left my carriage for a moment, and on returning along the corridor one of the train officials, foolishly mistaking my fine feathers for those of the Prince, doffed his cap, bowed profoundly, addressed me as " Monseigneur," and before I knew where I was had ushered me into the Prince's carriage, which for the moment I thought was my own. Realizing the mistake, I stammered an apology. " That's all right, Mr. Speaight," said Prince Maurice, and I fled.

He was travelling quite alone, however, and having seen us in our carriage on his way through to the dining-car an hour or two later, beckoned to us most courteously to come and sit at his table. We saw no more of him for the rest of the train journey and, more than ever not wanting to look as though I were seeking the Prince's company, I said to my wife, " As soon as we get on board, let's find somewhere where the Prince cannot see us." Besides, I am an extremely bad sailor even at the best of times. If it is at all rough my only hope of salvation is to remain absolutely motionless and silent. If anyone even talks to me I feel a premonitory twinge. As for movement of any kind at sea, I can hardly bear to think of it, even when on terra firma. So we



H.M. The Queen of Spain
and
H.R.H. The Prince of the Asturias
Madrid, 1909

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hastily made for a secluded corner and had just got comfortable seats, with our belongings all round us and our rugs on our knees, when whom should I see walking purposefully in our direction but Prince Maurice himself. I reluctantly disentangled myself from the deck-chair and stood up. That alone nearly caused my stomachic downfall—the ship being already under weigh and a heavy swell running. He said : " Mr. Speaight, will you do me a favour ? We are going to have a beastly crossing and if I sit down for a moment I shall be as sick as a dog. If I walk about alone people, I'm afraid, are sure to recognize me and stare, and I do so hate it. Besides, they would probably try and drag me into conversation. Would you be good enough to walk up and down with me ? "

" My God," I thought, " that's done it ! " But what could I do ? I could not possibly make any excuses. All I could do was to say " Yes," and with a *te morituru saluto* to my wife, who was cruelly amused, I smiled bravely and told the Prince that I should be deeply honoured. Never shall I forget that crossing. I can't possibly say how many times we walked round the wretched boat between Calais and Dover, or whether the Prince's fears that people would stare at him were justified, or what on earth we talked about. I was far too engrossed in the dreadful job of not being violently ill in the presence of Royalty. It would be difficult to imagine a more frightful situation : the Prince, who could only survive the crossing with dignity if he talked and walked all the time to distract his attention, leading

the way for me who would have given all this world and most of the next to have sat down and never spoken again for the rest of my life.

If I had been a journalist, what a marvellous interview I could have had! If I had ever dreamed of writing my reminiscences then, what a store of Royal anecdotes I might have amassed! For in order to keep going, I verily believe he would have told me anything, State secrets, Royal gossip, and all. And yet it is no good lamenting. I could not possibly have made use of the circumstances. All I could do was to say with a gulp every now and then, "Yes, Your Highness," "How interesting, Your Highness!" "Really, Your Highness," or, "No, Your Highness." It was terrible, the most awful nightmare crossing I have ever experienced; and I must have been across the Channel at least a hundred times in my life. Up and down we walked, bumping into each other every ten feet, for the swell grew heavier every moment—and forcing conversation desperately. Somehow or other, by sheer will-power, I managed to survive. Never have the white cliffs of Dover been so welcome to a returning wanderer, wandered he never so far. Shakily I shook hands with Prince Maurice, still intact, having achieved, in my humble opinion, the most heroic feat of allegiance ever demanded from a commoner by Royalty. Sir Walter Raleigh? I would have thrown every coat in my possession on the muddiest deck for Prince Maurice if it would have served equally well as an antidote for Royal sea-sickness.

Truly, the D.S.O. has been given for less!

CHAPTER VI

SECOND EXHIBITION

Exhibition of fair children—Why Russia was not represented—A mare's nest—Phenomenal success—A too zealous commissionaire—Visit of present Queen—Some outstanding pictures—The Crown Princess of Sweden and her children—Her love of gardening—The Duke of Connaught—The Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone—Our Royal Princes as British sailors—Lady May Cambridge photographed under difficulties—The Marchioness of Cambridge and her family—Their fondness for animals—The Duke of Teck—" All's well that ends well."

SHORTLY after my return from Spain I began to realize that the Exhibition which we had arranged to hold the following spring (" Fair Children ") was turning out a much larger affair than we had anticipated, and my brother and I could not help feeling what a great asset it would be to be able to include a portrait of the Czarina and the Heir Apparent of all the Russians.

We were fortunate in obtaining introductions to the Russian Ambassador, and through him the necessary letter was soon received from St. Petersburg informing us that the Czarina would be pleased to give me a sitting with her son. Armed with this letter I had no difficulty in obtaining my passport. About a fortnight before I was due to start, however, I received a visit from a photographer from Moscow. I had never met him before, and he came to me with an introduction from one of the trade-houses—

Kodak's, to be exact. His reason for wishing to meet me was that he had heard of our new studio and was anxious to see it and to obtain ideas about our up-to-date lighting arrangements. I was glad to see him, as it has always been my practice to mix as much as possible with other photographers ; indeed, I always call on fellow-artists of the camera even when I am abroad on my holidays. It is astonishing what can be learnt by exchanging ideas. This young Russian proved to be well read and exceedingly well groomed. A more respectable Muscovite it would have been hard to imagine, with his well-manicured hands and brilliant intellect. He spoke excellent English too, and on the spur of the moment I asked him to lunch with me at Pagani's, where Caruso used so often to sit at the next table. During luncheon I not unnaturally told him something of my proposed visit to St. Petersburg, and was rather surprised to find that he was not particularly interested, never having photographed any members of the Russian Royal Family. On the following day I lunched with him at his hotel in the Strand. He told me a great deal about Russia. He also gave me a number of useful tips about the journey with regard to Customs, and the clothes I ought to take. After lunch we went round the corner to the National Gallery and discussed the work of the Old Italian masters. Altogether, I saw a great deal of him during his week's visit to England. On the Friday he said good-bye and I told him how genuinely sorry I was that I should not have time to visit him in Moscow. He left and I thought no more about him.

A few days afterwards, when I happened to be out, two Russians called at the studio. They asked to see me and on being told I was not at home left without leaving their names or addresses. I thought no more about them either. So you can imagine my surprise when, a day or two later, I received an extremely curt letter from the Imperial Russian Embassy informing me that my visit to St. Petersburg was cancelled. No reason was vouchsafed for the cancellation either in the letter or when I went round to Chesham House in person to make inquiries. Months afterwards I discovered that one of the two men who had called on me was the head of the Russian Secret Police in England and that the handsome young photographer was a distinguished anarchist, moving in all the best bomb-throwing circles. The authorities had naturally become suspicious, and, well, the consequence was obvious. During his visit to London I had been with him on several occasions, and they had connected my request to go to Russia to photograph the Czarewitch with the visit of the anarchist. Circumstantial evidence was certainly against me. After all, a photographer, by very reason of his profession, is in the best possible position to obtain the most intimate details about his sitters, quite apart from being able to conceal a baker's dozen of bombs in his photographic apparatus. I am convinced to this day that the young Russian's visit to me had no ulterior motive, and that his friendship was purely that of one artist with another. It was a most unfortunate affair, however, and all I have

left of my intended visit to the Imperial Court is the passport *viséd* for Russia, and doubtless in the archives of the Russian Secret Police my name and photograph are still tucked away in some pigeon-hole for future reference.

Curiously enough, I once again came under suspicion as a potential spy. That was in the early days of August, 1914, when scares flew thick and fast and every one accused his next-door neighbour of espionage, or worse. Our name, though as Anglo-Saxon as the White Horse in Kent, or a bottle of Bass in Monte Carlo, could be readily altered into Specht. So the presence of a few utterly virtuous fan-tails in my brother's courtyard at Hatfield quickly aroused a great deal of unpleasant comment. We even had several visits from Scotland Yard in connexion with them. This was bad for trade. You cannot mistake a plain-clothes man. His boots always give him away, as they discovered when raiding night clubs last year. I was determined to take action, and finally decided to laugh them out of it, so when yet another inspector came to make inquiries I showed him a copy of our pedigree.

"I am delighted you have come," I said. "For years I have been a little dubious about my maternal great-great-grandfather. As you will see there is some doubt as to his birthplace. If, in the course of your investigations you discover anything about him, I would be glad indeed if you would drop me a line. . . ."

But to return to the Exhibition. Few people who have not had experience in the arranging of one can

realize the amount of work entailed. Those who have been on a Hanging Committee realize the trouble there is. Never shall I forget the time when I was arranging an exhibition at Olympia, in connexion with a charity bazaar, for which, by the way, there was no charge for admittance, but only for exit. Open lights were forbidden and I and my assistant were only allowed firemen's lamps by which to arrange the pictures. It took us all Saturday night and Sunday.

When one is not only responsible for the hanging but also for the actual making of every picture, the work is enormous, but at last, on May 18th, 1909, our Exhibition was opened. Among those who were present were Lady Constance Gore, the Hon. Lady Musgrave, Lady Dalrymple, Lady Dunmore, Lady Stamford, Lady de Trafford, the Baroness Reny and Anthony de Worms, Lady Gunter, Evelyn Lady Donoughmore, Lady Norah Brassey, Earl and Countess St. Germains, and Lord and Lady Desborough.

The *Morning Post* wrote: "On very few occa-
"sions has photography been offered to the public
"at the Bond Street Galleries, and therefore Mr.
"Richard Speaight is all the more to be congratulated
"on having arranged in the beautiful premises of
"his business a most interesting collection of his
"work in the photography of children."

I will not weary my readers with the criticism of the pictures. I believe, however, that this was the first occasion on which any photographer had the audacity to charge admittance for people to view his work. Naturally, we also sent out a great number

of invitations. The net receipts at the end of the first week amounted to over fifty pounds at a shilling a time.

An amusing incident occurred during the first week. I happened to be near the door when I heard a lady call out, " Mr. Speaight, what shall I do ? I have left my ticket at home, and I have no money and they won't let me in." I looked round and saw Princess Alice on the wrong side of the turnstile, confronted by a commissionaire who barred admittance. I could not help laughing as I explained matters to the commissionaire, and Princess Alice laughed with me. The present Queen, too, honoured the Exhibition with a surprise visit.

I was surprised at Her Majesty's intimate knowledge of the children of the aristocracy. She seemed to know them all by name and was able to discuss the faithfulness of the likenesses of each of them. But on the whole she showed far greater interest in my wife's miniatures.

This exhibition contained the portraits not only of the Royal children taken in Spain and Germany, but those of the Crown Princess of Sweden, Princess Alexandra of Teck (now Countess of Athlone) and the Princes George and John. It may seem conceited to say so, but regarding the English aristocracy it would be easier to mention those who were not there than those who were.

A picture that stands out in my mind was that of the Marquis of Worcester, now Duke of Beaufort. He was dressed as a Dutch boy, which costume seemed to suit him wonderfully. There was also

H.R.H. The Crown Princess of Sweden
and T.R.H. Prince Gustavus Adolphus, and
Prince Oscar Frederick, 1911

H.R.H. The Duchess of Albany
with her Grandchildren

The names from left to right are—
Viscount Trematon, Princess Sybil, Prince John of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Prince Maurice of Teck (who died in infancy), Prince Dietmar Hubert and Lady May Cambridge.

Claremont, 1911

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a picture of Lady Mary Chrichton-Stuart and the Earl of Dumfries, children of the Marchioness of Bute. Whenever I think of that picture I always recall the first visit of the Marchioness with her children. It seemed so odd to see them—the children I mean—beautifully dressed but barefooted and the soles of their feet quite hard and dark like those of any fisherman's child. For many years these children never wore shoes or sandals of any kind. Other beautiful children were the Hon. Imogen Grenfell, Lady Desborough's daughter, with her mass of fair, curly hair, in colouring like that of the Hon. Maynard Greville, and also Lady Avery's son. Oddly enough, Lady Mary Cambridge's photograph hung side by side with that of the present Duke of Beaufort, now her husband. Once again I was an unconscious prophet.

And now for a description of the sittings of the Royal children who appeared in the Exhibition. In an earlier chapter I spoke of the Crown Princess of Sweden in the schoolroom. Ten years passed and I was very pleased when, shortly before the Exhibition, I received a note informing me that Her Royal Highness wished for an appointment for herself and the children. I shall never lose my first impression of her as she entered the room. Hardly a trace remained of that girl in the simple schoolroom frock. Before me I saw an exquisitely gowned woman. I had been told that the Crown Princess was the best dressed Princess in Europe. Certainly her gown, with its graceful, flowing lines, still remains in my memory; it was of soft white silk, trimmed with

silver embroidery, her only jewels were a single row of large pearls round her neck, and she wore a large black Leghorn hat, trimmed with white camellias. It was a day gown of the kind one saw at Ascot. Her two children, as one would expect, were dressed in the typical English Royal fashion. I have often wondered that these low-necked dresses, with the elaborate, broad-ribbon-fringed tie-ups, with sashes to match, such as the baby Prince Sigvard wore, and so much in vogue with the Royal babies, have not been more copied by people of less exalted degree. Prince Gustav, the elder, wore a neat little white tunic. The Princess was very charming and much admired the flowers which I gave the children to play with. She at once realized that these had not been purchased from a florist; I told her they were from my own garden and she said she was very fond of flowers and gardening; indeed, we discussed horticulture for some time. In only one thing did I not get my own way. Picturesque as was her hat, it was difficult to get the right effect owing to the heavy shadow it threw. I asked Her Royal Highness if she would kindly remove it, but she said, "I cannot. My hair is dressed to suit the hat." One does not hear that excuse nowadays!

Fortunately for me, however, the Crown Princess paid a visit to this country to see her parents whenever possible, and I still remember her first greeting to me at her next visit to the studio: "You see, Mr. Speaight, I have left the hat behind." She then went on to ask if I thought the children had grown,

and whom they were like; and our conversation continued on the lines that one would expect from any fond mother. Knowing Her Royal Highness's love for flowers, I had again brought to the studio a basketful from the garden. But she told me that Prince Gustav had now outgrown these and would be more interested in soldiers or mechanical toys. Fortunately, I had a large collection of tin soldiers and together we played hilariously. He was also interested in a toy train, and I think that if Her Royal Highness had not had another appointment when the sitting was over he would have liked to spend the whole morning with me. How he used to love me to forget to move the signal and say, "Let's have an accident!" On this occasion the children were taken in fancy dress—the elder Prince being remarkably handsome dressed up as Henry VIII, and the baby looking perfectly sweet in Swedish national costume.

The next visit was in 1911, and by this time a baby sister had arrived. How proud the Princess was of her daughter! But no less proud were the two brothers. I went to Clarence House to submit the proofs. After she had looked through them, the Princess said, "Can you wait a moment? I want to show them to my father." On her return she said, "My father thinks they are wonderful, but he does not know how you manage to keep the children still. He says they are never still for a moment when they are with him." I can quite understand what a favourite he would be with his grandchildren, and how he would spoil them.

This reminds me of a conversation I had with him a year or two ago. A notice in large type had appeared in the London papers stating that His Royal Highness had just managed to escape a serious motor accident on the previous day. It said that he was very nearly run down by a car outside Buckingham Palace. I inquired of His Royal Highness if he were feeling any bad effects from his narrow escape. He replied, " It was a gross exaggeration ; a most trifling affair. In any case, it was entirely my own fault."

The last time I saw the Crown Princess was in 1913. By this time a fourth child had been born—the little Prince Bertil. Little did I realize when Her Royal Highness spoke of her next visit that the youngest member of the family would be sufficiently grown up to make one of a very engaging group, and that I should never see Her Royal Highness again. Nor did I think, when a very charming letter of thanks and appreciation came from the Crown Princess, that this would be the last communication I should receive from Her Royal Highness.

Other Royal sitters who appeared in the Exhibition were the children of one of our Princesses whom I had not seen for years, and who, in the meantime, had married. This was the Princess Alexander of Teck, now known as Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone. No member of the Royal Family has been more frequently to my studio. Since 1908 until now, hardly a year has passed without my being honoured by an appointment from her. Her Royal Highness is still, perhaps, our most graceful Princess.

She was a proud young mother then, when she first came in 1908 with little Princess May and Prince Rupert of Teck. They, like their mother, of course, for public and diplomatic reasons, changed their name during the war, and are now known as Lady May Cambridge and Viscount Tremanton. At that time I was struck by the resemblance of little Princess May to some of the earlier portraits of the late Queen Victoria. Prince Rupert was a sturdy boy, and as soon as he was old enough, like other Royal Princes, wore sailor suits.

I am always struck, whenever I see a Royal Prince in a sailor suit, to find how absolutely correct it is in every detail. These suits are not made of particularly fine material, but are the exact replica of a British sailor's uniform, and one and all seem to suit their Royal wearers perfectly. Indeed, I do not know how many Royal Princes I have photographed as miniature able-bodied seamen.

On one occasion Princess Alice asked me to go to Windsor to photograph her with her children. Her baby boy was only a few months old. I was glad that I was able to take this picture, because the baby died soon afterwards.

After war broke out I did not see quite so much of Princess Alice, but I remember an interesting picture, taken in 1918, of Viscount Tremanton as a boy scout. I thought it was a good sign of patriotism, and noticed how well the uniform suited him. Again, before Prince Alexander, now Earl of Athlone, left for the Front, Princess Alice asked me to go to Windsor to photograph him. Like his brother he is

a born soldier, and of all the men I have photographed in khaki few made a finer picture. The next time I saw Prince Alexander was after the shelling of the British Head-quarters at La Panne. But more of that in a later chapter on Belgium.

I have previously spoken of the official photographs of Her Royal Highness taken just before her departure for South Africa as the wife of the Governor-General. A few months ago, when Lady May Cambridge returned, our studio was in a state of upheaval owing to structural alterations. Seeing this, the lady in attendance turned to Lady May and suggested that the place was really not in a fit condition for her to stay and be photographed just then. Whereupon Lady May asked, "But is the *studio* all right?" On being told that it was, she said, "Mr. Speaight has always taken me, and I don't mind at all, so long as I can have my picture taken."

The children of the Marchioness of Cambridge also appeared in the Exhibition. One of them—little Prince George (now Earl of Eltham), who, at his birth was thought to be in danger of losing his sight—was the first of our Queen's nephews to be photographed in our studio. The light of the studio had to be kept subdued, which, as plates and lenses in those days were not so rapid, made the sitting one of the most difficult I have ever experienced.

Another fact which I always connect with the Marchioness of Cambridge's children is their fondness for animals. I do not think they have ever been to the studio without bringing a pet dog with

H.R.H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone

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H.R.H. PRINCESS ALICE, COUNTESS OF ATHLONE.

them. In those days I kept a pet canary of which they were very fond, and one of the first things they would ask on coming to the studio would be, " How's Peter ? " And their distress was great on one occasion when they learned that a stray cat had killed him.

Lady Mary Cambridge, who has always been such a favourite of Queen Mary, must be in her element as Châtelaine of Badminton. At the time of King Edward's Coronation I remember going to Badminton to photograph the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort in their robes. I stayed a couple of days to take various portraits that the Duke required. The first evening the Duke sent a messenger to my room to ask if I rode and would like a mount on the following morning, for it appeared that the whole family went cub hunting before breakfast. At this time I was very fond of a little mild riding, but my only experience had been hired hacks either in the Row or over Hampstead, and knowing my limitations as a horseman thought it wiser not to risk one of the Duke's animals. How fortunate I was in my decision I realized on the following morning while having breakfast, when I saw the party returning. There is a long, straight run in front of the house, with hurdles fixed at intervals, and it looked to me as if, for the last mile, they had a race over the hurdles to see who should get home first. I very much question if I could have kept my seat over one hurdle, but am quite certain that before the end of the course some fatality would have happened. Again, as at Mindrum, discretion proved the better part of valour.

But few have passed before the camera who have made a more lovely picture than Lady Helena Cambridge, now Lady Helena Gibbs. She, too, was a beautiful child with a mass of fair curly hair. Apropos of their parents, I remember well how, at the time of King George's Coronation, I photographed the Marquis and Marchioness of Cambridge in their Coronation robes. The Marquis was wearing the full dress uniform of the Life Guards and over it the robe and collar of the Grand Cross of the Victorian Order. I had arrived early because he did not wish to change twice, and I was shown into the drawing-room. This was crowded with bric-à-brac, much of which I recognized as Royal souvenirs collected during the long and interesting life of his mother, the late Duchess of Teck. He evidently put a great value on these and was very much exercised and annoyed when, appearing suddenly at the door in a dressing-gown, he saw me removing several of them, perhaps a trifle unceremoniously, from their sacred niches. Of course I realized that they were heirlooms and was taking the utmost care of them.

" What's all this about ? " he shouted. " I would not have had the pictures taken if I had known there would have been all this fuss."

" I am extremely sorry, Your Highness," I stammered, " but it would be quite impossible to obtain a picture of Your Highnesses in Coronation robes unless a considerable number of these things were cleared away."

" Who gave you permission to move them ? "

" N—nobody, sir. But as this was the only room

that was at all possible and I am being very careful, I thought no harm would be done."

" Well, mind you *are* careful," and without another word he left the room.

I did not look forward to his return ; but when he appeared in full regalia, either he had forgotten the incident or, with the diplomacy which one always associated with Royalty, he decided to let sleeping dogs lie. Anyway, no further reference was made to my lack of respect for the heirlooms. At the end of the sitting I asked whether I should rearrange the room. " Oh, it's all right," was the mollified reply, " the servants will see to that." Thus, inside a single hour I had seen the Duke of Teck (as he was then) in two different moods and two very different costumes.

A week later, when I submitted the proofs, I again saw him from a different aspect. This time he was dressed like a country gentleman, and was amusing himself over a quiet game of " patience." Doubtless he had just got it out, for he was in great good humour and readily handed back to me one of the proofs, autographed for my private collection. He showed me, too, a number of unpublished pictures taken during the Indian tour of the present King and Queen, and also asked me my opinion of a portrait painted of him while military attaché in Vienna. Altogether on the only occasion when Royalty has ever showed the least sign of lost temper with me there was every justification for it. And, anyhow, there was the happy sequel I have just described.

CHAPTER VII

A NEW RÔLE

My appearance in a new rôle—Visit to Highbury—The Chamberlains at home—The Archbishop of Canterbury—Mrs. Davidson as mentor—Lord Leverhulme—England *versus* America—Sequel—A wager—Sir Victor Horsley studies goldfish—Mistaken identity leads to embarrassing situation—Lord Northcliffe kills two birds with one stone—Mrs. Gordon Selfridge "cousining"—Lord Rothschild a considerate sitter—A munificent client—President of the Professional Photographers' Association.

WHAT perhaps stands out most clearly among my memories of 1910 is my first appearance on the platform as a lecturer. I don't consider myself nervous, but I have never felt more self-conscious than I did on this occasion. It had been arranged at the first Professional Photographers' Association Congress that I should give a lecture on "The Photographing of Children." I started the lecture as follows: "One of the most pathetic passages in the immortal novels of Charles Dickens is that in which Dora, realizing her limitations, beseeches David to carry her in his memory as his child wife, and if in the dim future he should ever be tempted to look back on her childishness to remind himself that from a child wife nothing but childish behaviour must be expected. Now, just as Dora pleaded for merciful judgment on the score of her childishness, so I must ask you to excuse the imper-

fections with which this paper is filled on the grounds that I am only a child photographer."

Though I was, in fact, thirty-four years old, I certainly looked younger, and as I looked down on that row of my brother-photographers' faces, many of whom were old enough to be my father, I could not help thinking that it was rather impertinent on my part to stand up and tell them about child-photography. One interesting face which always remains in my mind was that of the late Willy Downey, Queen Victoria's favourite photographer. He must have been over eighty then, but he listened attentively throughout the lecture and was one of the first to congratulate me afterwards. Since that day it has been my pleasure to give many lectures to brother-photographers, but never have I had a more appreciative audience.

Imperfect as my language must have been, and apparent as was my nervousness, they realized that I was in earnest and out to give them of my best. So kind were they that I made a vow that night, that whatever I learned about photography I would always share at the first opportunity with my fellow-workers. Through this action I may have given some things away, but I think I have been more than repaid by what has been given to me.

Apropos of my youthful appearance, an amusing incident comes to my mind. A lady from South America was bringing her children to be photographed. She said that our reputation had reached Buenos Aires and that she was disappointed on entering the studio to find that Mr. Speaight was not

photographing. I politely told her that I was Mr. Speaight. " Yes," she said, " but it is your father I want." I said, " I do not understand ; my father was never in this business." And it took quite a time to persuade her that I was myself. On the other hand, an American woman once came into the studio and asked the manageress if " The Prodigy " was working. If so, she added, might she see him ? It took the manageress some time to fathom the request. At last it dawned on her that I had so often been called " the child-photographer " that the lady thought I was literally an infant !

It was not until the war broke out, when I discovered that a number of young officers objected to being photographed by " the child-photographer," that I ceased to use that name. I could not blame them, and as soon as I discovered the cause of the trouble removed the phrase which had for so many years played a prominent part on my stationery and mounts.

Another sitting undertaken about that time was my visit to Highbury, near Birmingham. I went down to photograph the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, and young Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. I had always admired the great statesman, and was very much pleased when his wife, now Mrs. Carnegie, called at the studio to ask me to go to photograph him. But what a change from the figure one remembered of that great man during the Boer War ! I shall never forget my impression of him as he walked along heavily with the aid of a stick, on the arm of Mrs. Chamberlain.

He was still dressed as immaculately as ever, in spite of his apparent infirmities, with the monocle fixed in his eye and the orchid in his coat.

The house itself was typically early Victorian and the furniture was in keeping with that period; yet it had the advantage of being an harmonious whole, very different from that of a man I knew who lived at Chislehurst and told me proudly that his house was partly a Gothic residence and partly a Swiss châlet.

In after years I was still more delighted at having had this opportunity, for it was actually the last portrait ever taken of the great man. I shall always remember the kind and almost reverential way in which the present Sir Austen Chamberlain watched over him.

It was quaint, too, to hear Mrs. Chamberlain come forward and say, "Now, Mr. Speaight, we want big Joe and little Joe photographed together." A number of pictures were taken in the conservatory—not where his orchids grew, however! The only book which seemed to amuse Mr. Chamberlain was a bound copy of Hazelden's pictures in the *Daily Mirror*. Noticing this, I turned to Mrs. Chamberlain and said, "Would it be better if we gave Mr. Chamberlain a more serious-looking book?" She said, "He won't like it if you take this away from him. You must alter it afterwards."

My last impression of the veteran statesman was as I was leaving. "You have not said good-bye to Mr. Speaight, dear," Mrs. Chamberlain reminded him. With an obvious effort Mr. Chamberlain

raised himself from his chair, stood politely upright, and said nothing for a few moments. Then, for all the world as though he were addressing an audience, he said courteously, "Mr. Speaight, I thank you. Good-day, Mr. Speaight." He then relapsed into his chair.

I never saw "old" Joseph Chamberlain again. But right through his career I have seen "little Joe" at frequent intervals, Sir Austen and Lady Chamberlain being also regular clients.

One day "little Joe"—I ought to say young Mr. Joseph Chamberlain—burst into my studio and said excitedly, "Please, Mr. Speaight, can I use your dark room? I've photographed Lloyd George on a donkey, and I don't want to spoil the film."

He and the family, it appeared, had just returned from one of their periodical visits abroad—this time to Algiers. "Little Joe" was a keen amateur photographer, like many other of my clients, and I had frequently given him advice to enable him to obtain the best results.

A more devoted family I have never met. Whenever Lady Chamberlain—as she now is—had an appointment at the studio, her husband would invariably come and fetch her, however busy he was, and I do not believe that she ever ordered a photograph without first consulting him.

Another devoted couple are the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mrs. Davidson. The first time they came to the studio together I was much struck by his genial expression.

The Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain
Sir Austen Chamberlain, K.G.
and his son Joseph
Highbury, 1911

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"Your Grace," I said, "you look quite different from what your photographs led me to expect."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you don't look half as serious and severe as one would imagine."

"Oh! that's all due to my shaggy eyebrows," he said laughingly.

"What did I tell you, dear?" his wife interrupted. "Haven't I told you often to let Mr. Speaight photograph you?"

"Now that you have come, Your Grace," I said, "we must try and give to the world a pleasanter picture than has yet been taken."

The Archbishop readily entered into the spirit of it, and I was determined not to expose the plate until I got the expression I wanted.

A charming instance of his wife's devotion to him occurred as they were leaving the studio. The Archbishop, like many other brilliant men of letters, was forgetful of small things. "Now, my dear," said Mrs. Davidson, "thank the man who carried your bag, and remember to give him a shilling."

His Grace was a most natural sitter, very different from many of the lesser clergy, who, when being taken in their robes, have been not only somewhat unapproachable but also self-conscious. Indeed, for courtesy and punctuality, I always have found that men who hold the highest positions are the easiest to get on with.

For example, take the time when I was photographing at The Hill, Hampstead, for the late Lord Leverhulme. The housekeeper had been showing

me round and I mentioned to her that I wanted a large screen covered with a sheet to use as a reflector.

" There is only one in the house," she objected, " and that is in His Lordship's study, where he is now dictating letters, and I should not like to interrupt him."

" Well," I said, " I am quite sure His Lordship wants me to do my best, and to do that I must have a screen. May I ask him for it ? "

After a great deal of demur she very timidly knocked at his door. A gruff voice answered, " Come in." She said, " Mr. Speaight wants to speak to you."

As I entered the room—I can see him now, sitting at his desk—he said, " Well, young man, what do you want ? Come close up to me and speak clearly. I am a little deaf."

I apologized for troubling him and explained that to make a successful picture I ought to have the screen.

" *Must* you take it ? " he asked. I said, " I can only say that I could make a much better picture if I had it, sir."

" Well, take it."

Shortly afterwards he came into the room which had been arranged as a studio. " Have you got all you require ? " he wanted to know. On my answering in the affirmative, he remarked, " Then it's up to you to make a good job of it. For you will have no excuse now."

Mr. Bostwick, a well-known American, one day brought his three children to the studio to be photo-

graphed. The whole time that I was taking the pictures he was " rubbing it in " about the business-like methods and quick service of the American photographers. He said that in New York proofs were ready twenty-four hours after the sitting, and he did not understand why we took so long to submit our proofs in London. When we had finished the sitting I took out my watch and noticed that the time was 3.30. " Are you doing anything at 2.25 to-morrow ? " I asked him. " Why ? " was his reply. " Over here," I said, " we never take more than twenty-three hours for our proofs." He was highly amused, and on the following day, to the second, at twenty-five minutes past two he entered with watch in hand and asked for his proofs. I called to my manageress, and in a studiously unconcerned manner (so as not to betray the fact that we had been working overtime to go one better than America) I said, " You might see if Mr. Bostwick's proofs are ready." She came down in a few minutes with the proofs. Mr. Bostwick was at first astonished, then he burst out laughing. " Do me a favour. Show me how you do it," he asked, being a very keen amateur photographer himself. So I showed him round our works. " I shall have to put a big order through after this," he said. " Do me a hundred pounds' worth of pictures. It is worth it."

A few days later he surprised me by asking me out to luncheon. I accepted readily. During the meal he said, " I have got a proposition to put to you. I have been thinking this over. Are you willing to let me run you for a month in New York ?

My place in Fifth Avenue is at your disposal. It is well equipped for photography. I want you to come during the Horse Show week, and I will boom you for all you're worth. It is good for us sometimes to have a rise taken out of us, and it will amuse me immensely to run you against our own men." Unfortunately my engagements in London made it impossible to accept this kind invitation, and I reluctantly had to refuse.

One day a lady of title, who is much in the public eye at present, came into the studio and said, in a quite unconcerned tone of voice, "Mr. Speaight, I have accepted a wager of several hundred pounds that I won't be photographed in a West End studio in my knickers and camisole, smoking a cigarette and sitting with my legs crossed." This was in the prim and proper days, long before the present time, when the vogue is for costumes almost as slight, when most women smoke, and when it is considered good, rather than bad, for a woman to sit with legs crossed. My visitor wore a magnificent long coat of sable, and my natural embarrassment was increased when she took it off and calmly sat down before the camera! However, I managed to appear as unconcerned as she was—and enabled her to win the bet. The plates were destroyed; that was her stipulation. The photographs were unsigned; that was mine.

Not long after this incident another lady came to my studio with an equally unconventional intention. Her visit, however, was due to vanity, and not a bet. She had taken part in a Society display

of *tableaux vivants* representing the Grecian maiden in the familiar series of weather forecasts which appear in the *Daily Graphic*. She was very beautiful, and posed well; but when the proofs were ready she expressed great disappointment with them. "Mr. Speaight," she said, "I know quite well that I have at least as pretty a figure as the good lady in those photographic studies of Grecian figures you showed me. Why is it that my picture is so different?" "Madam," I replied, "the photographs you refer to were posed for by an artist's model, and she wore nothing under the Grecian costume to mar the graceful effect of the drapery."

"Why on earth didn't you tell me so?" "I thought you wished to be photographed as you appeared in the *tableaux*." "I don't care how you take me as long as you can get the most effective result," she replied; and without more ado she disappeared behind a screen and reappeared a moment later clad only in a length of diaphanous silk that revealed, even more than it concealed, the classic beauty of her figure. That again may sound ordinary enough nowadays; but twenty years ago it was the height of daring.

Very different was the experience I had with the late Sir Victor Horsley, the famous brain specialist. Sir Victor was the toughest customer I have ever had as regards trying to interest a client and make him feel at ease before the camera. I racked my brains to find a suitable topic of conversation, but all to no purpose. My range of subjects, sufficient as it was for everyday purposes, did not include

material suitable for a studio dialogue on the technical values of the human cranium. After desperate efforts on my part to keep the conversation going, we finally reached an awkward pause. Presently Sir Victor said brusquely, " I think we shall get along infinitely better if we stop wasting time in conversation, and you allow me to watch those goldfish in peace. I am wondering what they think about as they go round and round the bowl ! " With mingled feelings of chagrin and relief I moved the bowl of goldfish nearer to him—and an almost annoyingly successful photograph resulted ! As a term of reproach, " You haven't got the brains of a fish," has made me feel uncomfortable ever since !

On another occasion the wind was completely taken out of my sails by an American child of five. I began playing with him, as I would with any child of that age. All of a sudden he looked up at me cynically and said, " Say, guv'nor, do you take me for a darned kid ? Get on with the job ; I'm tired of this ! "

I felt somewhat abashed, too, one day when an Argentine lady of very ample proportions whom I had photographed came to collect her proofs. On her first visit I had formed an impression that she was a woman who would appreciate a flattering portrait. So the proofs had been delicately touched up and her figure ' carved down.' She went almost purple with indignation. " What do you mean by this ? " she shouted. " Fat I am and fat I'll be ! "

The above incident recalls the experience of a brother-photographer. He had kept his studio open

on a Sunday specially to suit the convenience of Sarah Bernhardt. He, too, thought he would please his client if he touched up the prints, so he very skilfully improved the shape of her legs. To his consternation, however, the divine Sarah went into a perfect fury. She returned all the proofs, refused to have the touching up removed, refused to allow them to be published, and refused to pay for them—so offended was she at the apparent suggestion that her figure could be improved upon.

One of my most important commissions round about that time was the christening photograph of little Lord Grosvenor, the son and heir of the Duke of Westminster. There was great rejoicing over his arrival. The birth of an heir to the richest dukedom in the world is a matter of more than ordinary interest. King Edward was one of the godfathers. The Duchess had sent for me, and when I arrived she was still in bed, looking radiantly happy; the nurses, however, were not too pleased to see me so soon after the event. "Mr. Speaight," she said, "do you think it would be possible to take baby's photograph directly after the christening? Except for the dining-room you can choose any part of the house you like to take the photograph."

"Certainly, Your Grace," I replied, and promptly chose the Rubens' Room, partly because it was at the end of the suite, where I knew people would not be likely to pass, and partly, too, because I could while away my spare time in looking at the pictures. There are always long waits on these occasions. I fixed up the temporary studio, and after gazing my

fill at the masterpieces wandered back to ask what time the photograph was scheduled to take place. While I was making my way through the crowd of guests in the reception-room a dear old lady, dressed all in grey, hurried towards me and, to my intense surprise, put both her hands affectionately on my shoulders.

"My dear boy," she gushed, "how beautifully you played the voluntary!"

The more I tried to explain that I did not know one end of an organ from the other, the warmer became her praise. By this time every one had stopped talking to listen to us. My embarrassment became intense. She insisted on registering her appreciation, until at last someone took pity on me and, drawing me on one side, explained that it was the Duchess of Westminster's aunt, who was both deaf and short-sighted and had mistaken me for her nephew, a brilliant amateur organist.

The photographs were then taken, and so much was thought of this type of photography at the time that several of the daily newspapers wrote accounts of how it was done. Little Lord Grosvenor, who died so tragically a few years later, was, as a matter of fact, wonderfully passive and gave no trouble at all, and, with the exception of the time when I photographed Princess Mary's second baby, never have such facilities been given me in England.

It is not generally appreciated nowadays that to take portrait or group photographs of permanent interest demands proper lighting, careful grouping, and suitable arrangement of backgrounds, etc.

Usually, when commissioned to take photographs in a private house one is expected to be satisfied with the same facilities—or rather lack of them—as will suffice for the press photographer, in whose work artistic quality is necessarily subordinated to " news " or topical interest. There are, however, a few rare exceptions when the client recognizes that without adequate preparation the photographer cannot do full justice to his subject. A gratifying instance of this consideration occurred in connexion with photographing the wedding group of Lady Grigg and her husband. She sent for me a day or two before the ceremony and asked me why I had not applied to her for permission to take her wedding photographs.

" Every other photographer in London has done so," she told me ; " but as you took me when I was a little child I would like you to take me just by way of contrast."

" I shall be only too pleased, if you are kind enough to let me have the facilities I require."

" By all means. Have just what you like."

" But I would rather not work with other photographers."

" I am sorry, but I have already promised one other firm."

" Well, if there are no more, I shall be glad to do it."

So I was allowed to arrange the lights and generally transform the room into a very efficient studio. Having learned that the bridesmaids were to be dressed in costumes copied from those of the Babi

children in Van Dyck's masterpiece, I went to the National Gallery to refresh my memory of the picture. Careful study of the grouping and lighting enabled me to achieve in the photograph a much more successful picture than might otherwise have been possible.

Some clients are very exacting, which, of course, is quite as it should be, provided they know what they want. The late Lord Northcliffe, for instance, was by no means easy to please. Having made up his mind what he wanted he generally wanted it at once, and he would brook nothing that fell short of his own preconceived standard. When I sent him proofs of the photographs I had taken of him in his robes as a Peer of the Realm, I received the following characteristic letter from him in reply :

DEAR MR. SPEAIGHT,

Please let me have your bill for those abominable proofs. The crime is not yours—I am so impatient, and the costume is so ridiculous.

Yours faithfully,
NORTHCLIFFE

He had certainly been impatient. Like many other great men I have photographed, he always came with his watch in his hand, and throughout the sitting was clearly afraid that he might be kept longer than he intended. The photographs suffered in consequence.

Lord Northcliffe, however—let there be no mistake about it—was one of the most considerate men it has ever been my pleasure to meet. On one

occasion when giving a sitting to my wife, whom he had commissioned to paint his portrait, he had scarcely been in the studio twenty minutes when he rose impatiently. "I really don't think I can afford the time for all this," he said, apologetically. "Will you instead come to my office to-morrow?" My wife assented, and the following day was ushered into the great man's room.

"Mrs. Speaight," he said, "I am going to work the whole time, except when you tell me to look up. May I read?" "I am afraid not, as I shall want you looking up at me all the time." "Well, may I interview people if they are near you?" Knowing Lord Northcliffe's keenness for work, and realizing how bored he would look if he had nothing to do, my wife agreed, and the plan proved a great success. She put her chair in one corner while his was placed near the window, to get the best lighting effect, and a third was placed conveniently for the people he wished to interview.

It was about the time when "*The Times*" was being turned into a penny paper and Lord Northcliffe was very anxious about the output of his printing machines. The first man to be interviewed was one of the engineers. "Sit there," said Lord Northcliffe, and added in his clear voice, "What is she doing?" Some enormous number was mentioned, but evidently His Lordship was not satisfied. "Not nearly enough," he said; "send So-and-So to me." The next man was closely questioned, and other men were sent for. Within twenty minutes he had interviewed half a dozen people. Throughout all

the interviews my wife was immensely impressed by his extraordinary knowledge, and his quickness in putting his finger on possible remedies for increasing the output of the mysterious " she." " Do you know who ' she ' is ? " Lord Northcliffe finally asked my wife.

" No. But I am very curious to learn."

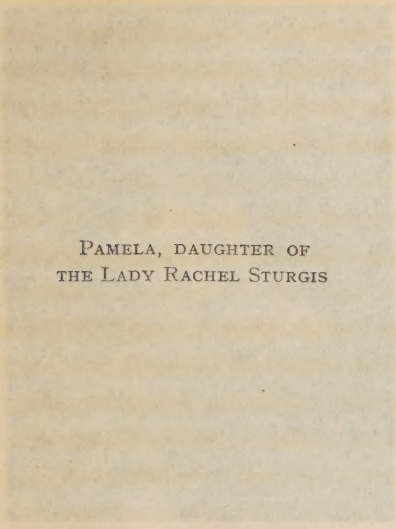
" It is my new printing machine," was the explanation.

The following day my wife had an appointment at the same hour. Lord Northcliffe was not there and she waited twenty-five minutes until he finally arrived, watch in hand as usual. " Mrs. Speaight," he said, " I am very sorry indeed. When will it be convenient for you to see me at your studio ? I have been unavoidably detained, and if you give me an appointment I will cancel any of mine that may happen to coincide."

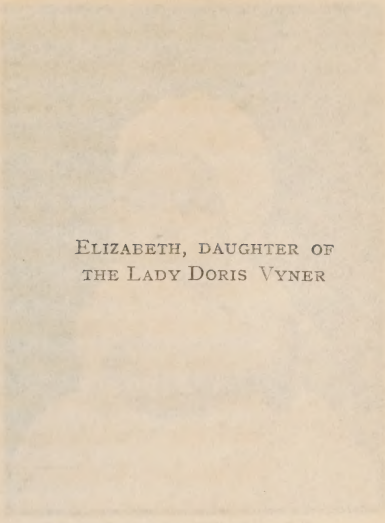
" When will it be convenient for you ? "

" I asked you," the millionaire corrected her, " when it would be convenient for *you* to see *me*." My wife took the hint. " What about 2.30 on Thursday ? " she suggested. " Right." He rang the bell and a secretary entered. " If I have any appointment for Thursday, 2.30 p.m.," he said, " cancel it."

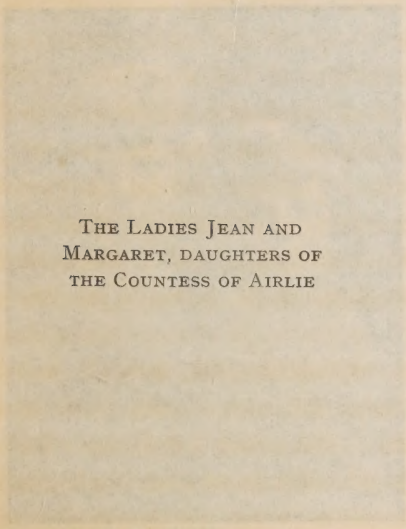
I never knew who recommended me to Lord Northcliffe. He was, however, one of my best and most considerate clients. He once gave me—free, gratis, and for nothing—the whole of the back page of the *Daily Mail* to cover with photographs of children who had sat for me.



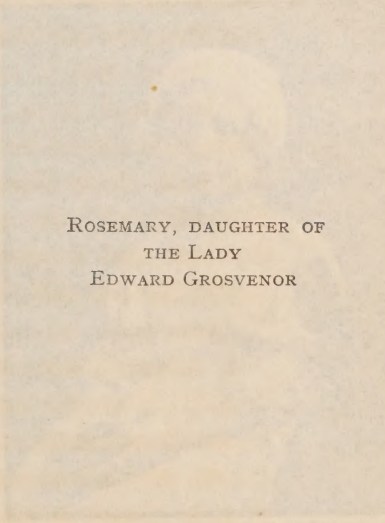
PAMELA, DAUGHTER OF
THE LADY RACHEL STURGIS



ELIZABETH, DAUGHTER OF
THE LADY DORIS VYNER



THE LADIES JEAN AND
MARGARET, DAUGHTERS OF
THE COUNTESS OF AIRLIE



ROSEMARY, DAUGHTER OF
THE LADY
EDWARD GROSVENOR

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PAMELA, DAUGHTER OF THE LADY RACHEL STURGIS.

ELIZABETH, DAUGHTER OF THE LADY DORIS VYNER.

THE LADIES JEAN AND MARGARET,
DAUGHTERS OF THE COUNTESS OF AIRLIE.

ROSEMARY, DAUGHTER OF THE LADY EDWARD GROSVENOR.

On another occasion Gordon Selfridge's mother was being photographed with her grandchild. It was just before her last visit to the States, and I always remember her expression. She said she was going "cousining." I said I did not understand. She said, "I am going over to America to see my relations. Cousining—that is what I am going to do." She was a wonderful lady of the old school.

About this time I received a note asking me to photograph Baron Rothschild, the head of the great firm of bankers. It is always interesting to meet men whose names have become household words and of whose actual personality one is ignorant. On my way to his house in Piccadilly, I wondered to myself what sort of reception I should get from a man who could shape the world's finance. I rather thought, from my past experience of the great chieftains and rulers of people, of the heads of the great industrial monopolies, and of famous statesmen, that I should receive as much, if not more, consideration than from some less busy and less important man. I was not to be disappointed. To the moment Baron Rothschild entered the room—an alert, well-preserved, elderly man. His first words put me at ease. "It is very kind of you to come here," he said; "it is so much more convenient for me to be photographed with my grandchildren here than in your studio. I do hope that the light will be sufficiently good for you to obtain a successful portrait." His grandson, a fine young boy, gave a certain amount of trouble. But though I knew that Lord Rothschild had little time to spare,

he showed not the slightest anxiety to hurry me, nor impatience towards the boy.

The next occasion that I did work for Lord Rothschild was at Tring, and knowing that I lived in Buckinghamshire he kindly suggested sending a car across. As this was a journey of over thirty miles and I could have gone by train the whole way, it only shows how kind and thoughtful he was.

Another munificent client was the late Mrs. Wrohan. She was, I believe, of Australian extraction. Whatever her origin, she possessed literally the finest opals in the world. On one occasion my wife was painting her wearing some of her magnificent opals (the miniature was afterwards exhibited in the Academy and received a great deal of admiration). After one of the sittings I asked about the frame. " My dear man, what on earth has that to do with you ? " she said. " You don't really think that I am going to spoil your wife's exquisite miniature by entrusting you with the frame, do you ? No, I am sending it over to Russia to get a frame of opals to match the opals in the miniature."

I may say that while the sittings were in progress the opals were sent back each night to her jeweller in Oxford Street. One evening, just as the special messenger was leaving with them, the telephone rang and a mysterious message was conveyed to me, requesting that the opals should be sent to Claridge's. I did not like the sound of it all, particularly as I knew that Mrs. Wrohan usually stayed at Brown's Hotel. However, I called a taxicab and, accom-

panied by my manager, drove to the hotel with the opals.

" Don't forget," I told him, " if I do not return in ten minutes, send for the police."

All was well, however, and the message was genuine. I went up to her suite and barely had the door opened when Mrs. Wrohan appeared. She must have felt intuitively that I was nervous.

" What a fool I have been," she exclaimed, " to cause you all this anxiety. As a matter of fact, though, each of these opals is known to every big jeweller in Europe and they could not possibly have been disposed of without my hearing about it and consequently stopping it. In any case, they are nothing like my best opals. Please forgive the trouble I have caused you and come and see my collection to-morrow."

Next day I spent an hour inspecting tray after tray of the most lovely gems. Among them was a box of a dozen jewelled butterflies. Some measured four inches across, each wing a single opal. I openly expressed my admiration.

" Well, Mr. Speaight," she said, " which do you like best ? "

" You may laugh at me," I replied, " but this cameo in opal with the old marquisate setting appeals to me most."

" Many people would not think it valuable. It is the oldest though, and a great favourite of mine. How do you think it would look best worn on the figure ? "

" On a long platinum chain, I should think."

"I admire your taste." She turned to the jeweller.

"Bring me a selection of platinum chains," she said. They were brought.

"Choose the chain you like best," she ordered. I did so, quite unsuspectingly. She then asked the jeweller for a card. On it she wrote: "With my love, Katie Wrohan."

"Now take it home," she said, "and give it to your wife."

The following year was a proud one for me in many ways. I was elected President of the Professional Photographers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland—incidentally, the youngest president they had ever had. It was an extremely busy time for me. I had decided that it was my duty to call on every photographer in the West End whom I had not the pleasure of knowing. This I did. With one exception I was most cordially received. I called on a certain London photographer, who at first—not recognizing me—mistook me for a client, and politely asked me to take a seat, saying he would be disengaged in a few minutes. He returned a moment or two later and I explained who I was. Presumably mistaking the perfectly innocent reason of my visit for a desire to pry into his professional secrets, and giving me no chance of explaining, he showed me the door.

This is not a technical book on photography, and I will not give too many details of my work as president. Besides visiting a great number of photographers all over the country and officially

attending many functions, I had more than two thousand letters to answer. I still adhere to the advice I gave to the members of the Professional Photographers' Association: "Remember, every picture that leaves your studio is an advertisement—good or bad."

The year 1913 and the first half of 1914 were uneventful except for the increased rush of clients. They included the Duchess of Rutland with her daughter, Lady Violet Charteris, and her baby. I had often admired the delightful pencil drawings done by the Duchess; I did not realize, though, the great assistance Her Grace would be to me in the studio. She brought all sorts of accessories—family lace and so on—and made various suggestions which were very helpful. Of the many generation groups I have taken I think this was the most successful. It is delightful to work for and with a real artist.

The Marchioness of Camden, who has been a regular client of mine since the present Earl of Brecknock was a baby, came several times. Lord Brecknock has since more than once brought his own child to be photographed.

The Countess of Drogheda, Lady Birkenhead, the Duchess of Norfolk, the Viscountess Crichton, Lady Charles Fitzmaurice, the Marchioness of Exeter, Lady Gerard, the Countess of Lytton, Lady Kerry, the Duchess of Hamilton, Lady Beatrice Pole-Carew, Lady Maidstone, and the Duchess of Roxburghe were some of the few whose names stand out as having given me sittings for themselves or brought their children during this period. The

graceful lines of their long, flowing draperies and their masses of glorious hair—how it helped the photographer! From an artistic point of view I deplore the change to modern fashion. I will not pretend that there are not many advantages in it; but still, artists are selfish.

Another sitter was Mrs. Winston Churchill, and to this day I can see her in a soft, clinging, dark silk dress, perfectly plain, relieved only by a straight row of buttons down the front; it had long sleeves and just a piece of lace about the neck, and her hair was coiled in a glorious auburn bunch. I do not know whether Mrs. Churchill has sacrificed it for fashion like so many others, but I hope not. Her first baby was clinging to her, nude; it was a real picture of a modern Madonna and child.

Lady Hugh Grosvenor came with her children. Little did I think then of the terrible tragedy that was to befall her during the early days of the war! Her husband was one of the earliest to be posted as missing, and I do not believe his fate was ever known.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GREAT WAR

Subalterns in the studio—The Prince of Wales and his friends—Buckingham Palace in war-time—Lord Northcliffe and the moratorium—The supreme test—Lady Jellicoe's miniature—A Zeppelin raid—"Kitchener's day"—The Australians—A Christmas party—Caledonian market commandeered for a society jumble sale—Lady Diana and the donkey—G. K. Chesterton as Tony Weller.

AND then came the war, and with it the rush of young subalterns to the studio, many not out of their 'teens and attended by proud, sad mothers. The previous summer the same boys had been almost dragged to the studio during their holidays to spend an impatient half-hour before the camera in cricket flannels. Now the schoolboys had become men, very conscious of their new uniforms and trying hard to conceal their nervousness under an exuberance of good humour. A few weeks later perhaps a sadder, yet prouder, mother would return alone and give me details of her son's great sacrifice.

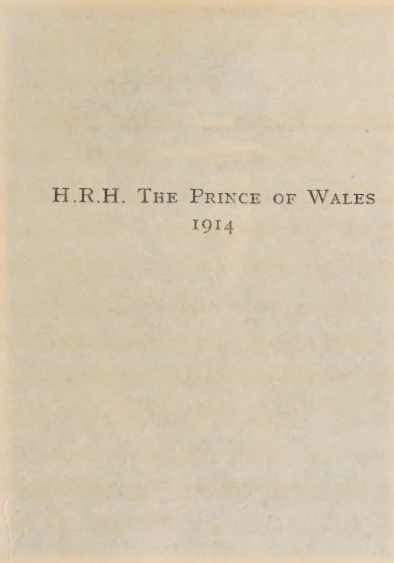
Before 1914 was out the King's two eldest sons had both appeared before my camera—the Prince of Wales in the uniform of a subaltern in the Grenadiers, and his brother, the Duke of York, in that of a naval cadet. Both were just as proud of their new uniform, and just as anxious to get on

with the work, as any of the hundreds of young men who passed through my galleries during these months.

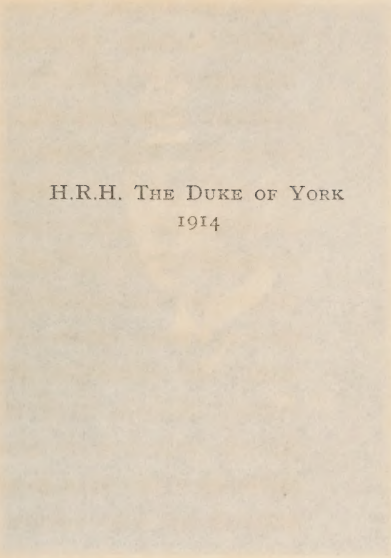
How changed the Prince was the next time he came to the studio! Of the many officers who passed through, few I had seen had gained such confidence and command of manner. His face showed what he had been through at the Front, his carriage was altogether different; and the ribbons on his breast showed something of the service he had seen. At the time I was photographing a group of young officers and, as usual, when the Prince came in, I asked him straight to the studio. As he entered they stood to attention, which he acknowledged with a cordial smile.

The next time, March, 1916, was on a different errand—one of his short leaves from the Front. It was shortly after nine o'clock in the morning, and he had come to look through the photographs of one of his fellow-officers, whom he knew I had taken, and who had been killed. He chose quite a number of these and had them sent on to the sorrowing parents.

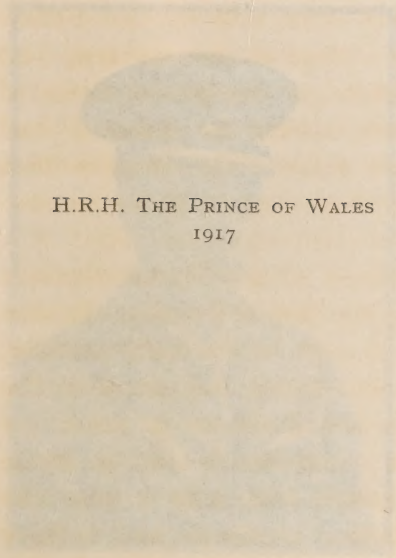
The first war-time picture of the Prince reminds me of how, even among the Royal Family, the war had effected a startling change in the daily routine. On going to the Palace to submit the proofs of the pictures I found no liveried footman to usher me into the Royal presence; just one N.C.O. in khaki was in attendance. Though still only a boy, the Prince seemed to have gained assurance and to have learnt how to do things for himself. He was his



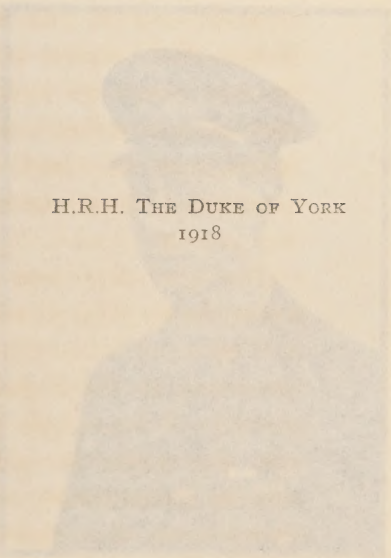
H.R.H. The Prince of Wales
1914



H.R.H. The Duke of York
1914



H.R.H. The Prince of Wales
1917



H.R.H. The Duke of York
1918

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own secretary and, sitting at his great desk, marked what proofs he wanted in a most business-like way. This was the day before his departure for the Front, as I happened to know. I believe I was the last civilian to see him on any business matter before he went next morning. He made no reference whatever to it, however, and was perfectly normal.

Even the hurry and stress of the first few weeks of the war did not make the really great men inconsiderate or fussy; they seemed indeed to become more courteous in consequence.

For example, a few days after the moratorium was issued in 1914 I received from Lord Northcliffe a very kind letter to the effect that during the next few weeks we should all be passing through difficult times and money might be very scarce. He did not know what he owed us, but enclosed a cheque for £350, telling us to put any balance to the credit of his account.

The money had never been solicited, and indeed the work, in payment for which it was sent, had not even been completed. Coming as it did at a time when Lord Northcliffe must have been working to distraction it was a memorable action.

On several occasions this great journalist came to my studio, and during one of his visits I saw as great a compliment paid him as any man could hope to receive. Lord Northcliffe and the ex-King of Portugal, chatting together, were walking across the reception-room towards the staircase which led to the studio. Northcliffe here stood back to give precedence to his Royal companion, saying, " Sire,

precede me," but the ex-King, smiling, urged him forward. " In England," he said, " Lord Northcliffe goes first."

On another occasion when Lord Northcliffe left the studio earlier than he had expected he told me that he had a quarter of an hour to spare and did not wish to be too early for his next appointment. I asked him if he would care to see my works. He accepted, and I showed him all round. When we had finished, he said, " Mr. Speaight, you are very successful." I replied, "Not as successful as Your Lordship." He looked at me and said laughingly, " I have had several years start on you."

Amongst those who made the supreme sacrifice, I remember, were Lady Glanusk's two sons, one of whom gave his life in the Army, and the other as midshipman in the North Sea. Then there was Charles Seeley. I was once travelling in a train with a number of tommies who were just back from Gallipoli. In their wild way they were discussing their officers. I am afraid most of them did not have a great opinion of them, but all at once from a corner of the carriage a young, tanned boy exclaimed, " You can say what you like about your officers, but I haven't a fault to find with mine. He knows his job better than we do, and when there's danger he is always in the midst of it, and he's so considerate. We call him ' our Charles.' " I had known young Charles Seeley since he was a baby and was aware that he had been at Gallipoli, and somehow this story seemed to connect me with him. I turned to the lad and said, "Does his other name happen to be Seeley?"

He answered, " Yes, sir. And there's no finer officer in the British Army." When I got home I wrote to Lady Seeley and told her of it, and in a box up away among my treasures is a letter of thanks from her, far too beautiful for me to wish to publish. When, a little while afterwards, I read in the paper of his sad end I felt amply repaid for the little trouble I had taken, knowing how much pleasure it had given to his sorrowing parents.

Sir Philip Brockenhurst was another officer who stands out in my memory from the peculiarity of his medal. He was one of the few officers at the Front wearing the Polar Medal. The white ribbon amongst the other colours was so conspicuous. Another officer whom I had known since he was a baby and who gave his life was Captain Ashley. I photographed him in 1901 when he was a page at the wedding of the Earl of Shaftesbury. The first time he came into the studio in khaki he was a fine figure of a man ; the next time he was wheeled in, partly paralysed in the back. Afterwards he succumbed to his wounds. I remember, too, how the beautiful wife of Colonel Willy Gordon, of the Gordon Highlanders, who so valiantly won his V.C. in the Boer War, would come into the studio with her son Colin and get me to take pictures of the boy with toys which his father had given him, in order that they could be sent out to amuse the Colonel after he had been taken prisoner. Several years afterwards, when his exchange was obtained, Colonel Gordon came in to see me. You could see what he had been through. He thanked me for what I had done, but I tried to

explain to him that thanks were not necessary. It was one of the comforts of those who were not able to go to the Front to do little things for those who were.

Again, during the Christmas of 1914 Lady Jellicoe permitted me to send her husband a miniature of herself, although she had intended to send one to him as a Christmas present. This was only rendered possible by having it sent by the special courier to the Fleet. A few days later I received the following letter in Lord Jellicoe's own handwriting :

H.M.S. Iron Duke,
Dec. 23rd, 1914

Dear Mr. Speaight,

I cannot find words in which to thank you for your kind thought and for the beautiful miniature you have sent me. Indeed, I am most deeply touched and beg that you will accept my warmest thanks. The likeness is excellent and the miniature a beautiful work of art.

Believe me,
Yours most truly,
J. R. Jellicoe

I then had the experience shared by thousands of other crocks in England at that time. I endeavoured to enlist and appeared before numerous medical boards, but was indubitably a C3 man ! I joined the first volunteer regiment—the National Guard—however. I won't say much of my career as a soldier, except that on one occasion I was guarding, or helping to guard, a rather important tunnel when there was a Zeppelin raid on. My job was to watch

from 2 to 4 a.m. the approach to the tunnel from the waterworks, under penalty of being shot at dawn if I did not carry out my duties. The roar of the Zeppelins' engines seemed to bring out all the cats in the neighbourhood. I should not have believed it possible that there could have been so many. I did nothing but stumble over cats with a loaded rifle in my hand. I could see nothing but their eyes—horrible! I shall never forget it.

It has always been my regret that I never met Lord Kitchener. The nearest I ever got to him was early in 1915, at Douglas', the hairdressers in Bond Street. One day my man seemed unusually excited. He kept on chanting, "Only one more day! Only one more day!" I do not think I am specially inquisitive, but I couldn't help saying:

"I wish I knew why you keep on saying 'only one more day'."

"Why," he said, "to-morrow is the third Thursday in the month."

"Well," said I, "that doesn't enlighten me; I am sorry, but I don't understand."

"To-morrow is Kitchener's day."

"Well," I said, "I still don't understand."

"I am sorry, sir," he said, "but it's like this. On the third Thursday in the month Kitchener always has his hair cut, and nobody else ever cuts it except me. Now, they won't take me in the Army, but I am determined to go, and what I am going to do to-morrow is, when Kitchener's hair is half cut, to nail him down and tell him what I want."

I did not ask him what job he wanted, and I never

knew the result of his interview with the Field-Marshal ; but I imagine his patriotism was rewarded. All I know is that I never again saw the man who for so many years had cut my hair.

But to return to the studio. On more than one occasion it was amusing to see an important officer impatiently waiting downstairs to find that the last victim of the camera was his own subaltern. Commander King came in one morning to be photographed on his return from Antwerp. He was waiting downstairs when the studio door opened and he saw that one of his own subalterns had kept him waiting. He chaffed the boy and said he had no idea who had kept him waiting, or he would have come up himself long ago.

Soon it became quite embarrassing to photograph officers while dressed as a private, so, with the exception of Saturdays, I used to change at the studio before going on service. But it was great fun—especially when I recollected that I was a private in the National Guards—being able to give orders which had to be obeyed even to generals and admirals, including the man who gave orders himself to the whole of the British Fleet. " I think it would be better if you turned your head a little to the left," I would say to them. " Kindly fix your eyes on such-and-such a point." I will say this, though, with regard to Lord Beatty ; one had to have sufficient tact not to ask him to alter the tilt of his cap, knowing how characteristic it was of the Admiral, even though King's regulations would have made it desirable for him to have it straightened.

One morning, though, being due for early parade, I had omitted to change, and my secretary telephoned to ask me to come down at once. While I was arguing on the telephone she tactfully said, " His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is waiting for you." There was no alternative but to go at once. I shall never forget it. The Prince of Wales and Prince Albert were together—the latter a little in the background, and I, doing my best to put on a military attitude, clicked my heels and stood at attention. The Prince of Wales, with his usual tact, concealed any merriment that he might have felt, but Prince Albert—now the Duke of York—turned away with shaking shoulders. Neither of them had seen me in uniform before, and perhaps nobody realizes my limitations for military carriage more than myself.

During the war I naturally became very much interested in the soldiers, more particularly in those from the Colonies. As far as I was able, I got to know them, and at my little place at Beaconsfield we used to have a number of them on Saturday afternoons from the Australian Hospital at Harefield. How those boys used to love to come! In fact, I believe my little parties of twenty or thirty were more appreciated than many of the larger but more formal outings arranged for them. As long as it was possible to obtain petrol my friends who had cars were only too anxious to lend them. We spent many happy Saturday and Sunday afternoons playing croquet, bowls and other games and getting to know one another. I think, though, that their greatest

delight of all was being allowed to wander through the garden and pick as many flowers as they liked to take back to the hospital. It was not so much that they wanted them for themselves. One and all would say, " How pleased Sister will be! " It was this thoughtfulness for others that pleased me so. My son Langford was by this time at a boarding-school, so the nurseries being empty, we rigged them up as two bedrooms. At these Saturday parties we got to know the boys, and when we found out those who had no friends in England, we used to ask them down for the week-ends. How thoughtful and considerate they were! I remember one Sunday morning going up to the boys and saying, " Well, what shall we do to-day ? " They looked at me and said, " We are going to church." I said, "Do you want to go to church this morning ? " They said, " Yes." Being curious, I asked them why. " We believe you go to church on Sunday morning, and while we are here as your guests we want to do the same as you do."

Now, many of these Australian lads were from the backwoods and had very little behind them in the way of educational advantages. They had, though, all the instincts of gentlemen, and in every way conducted themselves as such. I should like to mention that at these functions my neighbour, Mrs. Gerald Thornton, used to join us in entertaining the boys ; we threw our gardens into one, and at Christmas, 1917, we had twenty of them to dinner. This naturally strained the resources of a small house, but we wanted them to realize what a real old Christmas dinner was.

With a little manœuvring we were able to seat twenty-four to dinner. Of all dinner-parties we have ever given never has such trouble been taken to make the table worthy of the occasion. The room was lighted by a number of candles and the decorations consisted of holly with a profusion of flags of the Allied Armies. To each boy was given a patriotically designed menu, inside which the following words were printed : " That this year may bring a glorious peace to the Empire you serve so well, and that you may return safely to the dear ones at home is the sincere wish of Mrs. R. N. Speaight and Mrs. G. Thornton."

After dinner we played progressive games. There was hardly a boy in that gathering who had both his feet or both his arms, but it was wonderful to see how they helped each other, cutting up their meals or wheeling one another about. Never a Christmas passes without my receiving a letter from one or more of the boys who were there, reminding us of the happy Christmas party.

I am afraid I have taken up some time in giving a description of one of the very small parties which were being given all over the country. Now let me mention my experience of one of the great society functions during the War. One at which I helped was the Great Fair in the Caledonian Market. The officers of the National Guard arranged for the whole of my battalion to help in any capacity required during the fête. It was amusing to see heads of industrial firms, well-known members of the Stock Exchange, acting as carriers, and office boys, indeed

performing any menial service that was required. My own particular job was to be in attendance on Lady Arthur Paget. The last time I had seen this *grande dame* was before her terrible accident, when she fell down an open lift and her life was despaired of. In spite of the terrible sufferings she had been through she was as gallant as ever. On this occasion, instead of being merely a beautifully gowned society woman she was there for business, and I was amused at her simple headgear and the long, white linen coat she wore. I must explain that her particular work was looking after the live animals. It was a unique idea having a fair at the Caledonian Market—the world-renowned centre where you are supposed to be able to buy anything from a boot button to a grand piano. What they had really arranged was a glorified Jumble Sale. During the afternoon one of the most famous auctioneers from Smithfield came down to hold an auction. I doubt if such a medley of animals has ever been put up under one hammer. They started with sheep. Now my calling as a photographer had given me little experience of live stock, and when told to grab hold of some of these restive animals I am sure I was far more afraid of them than they were of me. How the great heads of the meat industry vied with one another to buy these poor, half-frightened cattle ! Up and up went the price to the excitement of the public, and when at last one was knocked down to some jovial butcher for a ridiculously high price he would laugh and say to his companion, " Jack, now it's *your* turn ! " and up again would the poor animal be put for auction.

Each time I clutched hold of the beast, and so it went on ! Then Persian kittens were sold. I remember one particularly beautiful one. I held it up in the basket whereupon Lady Arthur suggested, " It would be better if you took it out of the basket, it is so beautiful, and they can't see it, and if the ladies here can't see what they are buying they will never bid as those gallant gentlemen have been doing."

It was for a good cause, and there I stood, holding this spitting, thoroughbred Persian kitten high above my head, while he was digging his claws into my wrist. I was certainly glad when the kittens were done with and we came to the dogs ; but some of these looked remarkably ferocious and I stoutly refused to hold them up.

While this was going on I remember seeing Mrs. Alfred Duggan, now Marchioness Curzon of Kedleston, arrive, accompanied by Madame Merry del Val. She looked very lovely dressed in widow's weeds, her only ornament being a large sapphire cross worn on her breast. We were just about to auction an Alsatian dog. The bidding went high for this, but Mrs. Duggan would not be done and it was knocked down to her. In a tone of utter bewilderment she turned to me and asked, " What am I to do with it ? How am I to get it home ? " I laughingly said I could not help her. Clearly if we started taking one pet home we should have to take them all home.

The last animal to be auctioned was a mottled donkey. At first, the bidding for this was very slow, and then someone started and, to encourage the bidding, Lady Diana Manners, now Lady Diana

Duff-Cooper, entered the arena. The bidding was fast and furious. At last Lady Diana was caught and it was knocked down to her amidst shrieks of laughter. I can see her now walking round the market leading this donkey.

Lady Arthur Paget—how hard she worked that day! Though she had hardly got over her illness she would not leave that night until she had visited every animal that remained behind to see that they were comfortable and had food. As I was leaving to go home I again came across Lady Diana, still leading her donkey. By this time I was very tired. She asked me if I could take it home for her, but, I thought, not even for the beauty of Lady Diana, nor for the love of charity, would I walk through the streets of London dressed in khaki, leading a donkey in appearance like the mascot of a regiment. "No, Lady Diana," I replied, "it would be too much like the blind leading the blind."

Another fête I helped at was at Beaconsfield. It was organized by Lady Stopford, who, throughout the war, worked indefatigably on behalf of various Red Cross societies, either in organizing working parties or getting up fêtes and concerts. Her vitality seemed never ending. On this occasion Lord Burnham had lent the grounds of Hall Barn for the outdoor fête. It was a Dickens fête; by that I mean everybody was dressed in Dickens characters. There were the usual number of side shows with all kinds of relics, booths, and what not, but one figure still stands out vividly in my mind; it was G. K. Chesterton. The day was hot and sultry, and

Chesterton had dressed up as Tony Weller. The costume was tight for him, which possibly is not to be wondered at, but there, he worked right through the afternoon, an almost pathetic figure! Never have I seen a man get hotter. The newspapers had written this up a good deal—I mean about Mr. Chesterton appearing as Tony Weller—and I photographed him for the occasion. Altogether the fête was a brilliant success, and over a thousand pounds was made during the afternoon—not bad for a small country town.

CHAPTER IX

VISIT TO THE ANGLO-BELGIAN FRONT

Invitation to Belgium—Travelling on *au Service du Roi*—The King and Queen of the Belgians at Moëres—Restricted toilet facilities—A cow-house as studio—A rapid transformation—The Queen in danger—The King of the Belgians—A considerate consort—Photographer and temporary assistant at cross-purposes—The Queen to the rescue—The Earl of Athlone in Belgium—A railway transport officer nonplussed—Cross of Chevalier of the Order of Leopold II awarded—Exhibition for Her Majesty's crêches.

AS each succeeding week of the war brought fresh proof of the heroism of the King and Queen of the Belgians, I wished more and more that, in the years before the war, they had honoured me with a command for my services. Little did I dream that that opportunity would come in the hour of Belgium's greatest distress. Towards the end of August, 1917, I was rung up on the telephone and asked if I were prepared to go to the Front. Having been rejected several times, as I have told you, for military service, this naturally caused me some surprise. However, no further information was vouchsafed, and I was merely told to call the following morning at Apsley House. Here I was received by Major A. A. Gordon, Private Secretary to the Duke of Wellington and attaché to the Military Household of H.M. the King of the Belgians and Belgian King's Messenger. I

learnt from him that rumours were being spread by the Germans among the Belgians in occupied Belgium that the Royal Family had fled from the country. " In order to counteract this," said Major Gordon, " it is considered urgently necessary by the Belgian authorities that a photograph of the King and Queen should be taken on free Belgian soil and distributed among the people. This will actually be done by the Flying Corps dropping leaflets containing reproductions of the photographs." I heard afterwards that, during the King's triumphant march through Belgium, many farm-houses had these same photographs, picked up and saved at the greatest risk, displayed at their windows.

A member of the British Royal Family, whose name was not then given to me, had suggested my name for the job. I was naturally delighted at the chance of a visit to the Anglo-Belgian Front—a chance which I had thought quite impossible since the outbreak of war. A few days were spent attending to the hundred and one formalities imposed upon any civilian visiting the zone of operations, and on the last day of August I left England on the most interesting and exceptional commission that I had ever received. Major Gordon, who was returning to his duties, was my companion on the journey, and I thus enjoyed all the privileges of a King's Messenger. The train was crowded with staff officers, but we were allotted a private compartment and also a private cabin on the staff boat. All my numerous cases were marked " *Service du Roi des Belges* " and travelled the whole way without the slightest

hindrance, while we ourselves, the moment the ship was moored at Boulogne, sped off by motor-car at lightning speed through Calais and Dunkirk to the Belgian Royal quarters at Moëres near Furnes. My extensive paraphernalia followed in a motor-van. A general whom I had photographed a few days before accosted me on the boat, and asked with some surprise what I was doing there. On learning that I was on King Albert's service, he exclaimed, " Damn ! This means that my car will be hung up until you have got away."

Yet in spite of these extraordinary facilities there was an atmosphere of insecurity about the whole journey. Indeed, the discomfort of a crowded carriage and the ordeals of the Customs House of pre-war days seemed a great deal less unpleasant than the horrible possibilities conjured up by the lifebelts which every one, without exception, was compelled to wear during the crossing.

We reached Moëres at dusk. Our arrival was evidently not unexpected. An eager group of Household officers immediately collected all round us, impatient to hear the latest news from London, and to examine the very miscellaneous collection of packages which the Messenger had brought with him in addition to his official dispatches. These were of a most practical nature and showed how the Royal Family depended upon London for the actual necessities of life. Among other things, I caught sight of boxes of soap and Quaker Oats from Harrods, and also—surely a most human touch—a few packets of seeds for the Queen's temporary garden.

Everything about the quarters was severely simple. The King and Queen, with their Household, were lodged in two ordinary Flemish farm-houses, completely devoid of ornament, and containing only the plainest furniture. Dinner that night was as frugal as possible, incidental music of a rather alarming character being provided by an aeroplane skirmish over our heads. While dining, we all went out through the french window to have a better view of it. Bombs were dropping everywhere, but no one took much notice. The officers merely exchanged a few remarks. This gave me confidence and I retired early to a bedroom in keeping with everything else at Moëres.

On waking next morning I beheld the most ridiculous sight: my handsome and debonair travelling companion of the previous day was entering the room clad in nothing but a skimpy bath towel, and dragging after him a rubber hip-bath. I learned that it was shared among the Household, and was handed every morning from one dignitary to another in this charmingly naïve manner. After breakfast, at which I swear that the coffee was not made of coffee, and where stale bread took the place of those delicious *petits pains* of happier days, I went across to the Royal quarters to seek a suitable room for my temporary studio. However, a Flemish farm-house was not built for the convenience of a photographer, and every room in the house was so badly lighted as to be quite impossible for me. The only place in which the camera would have a chance of doing justice to their Majesties was an old cow-house, with

its floor a mass of mud and filth. It was now used as a garage. It was, then, in this byre, and not in a Bond Street Studio that the now historic photograph of *Le Roi en guerre* was taken. It is astonishing what wonders can be worked when one is on duty for a King. Before midday tarpaulins for the floor had been brought from La Panne, twenty-eight kilometres away, and I had been able to make the " byre " presentable.

At luncheon that day, before the photographs were taken, a vivid incident occurred which showed the devotion of the Household to their sovereigns. Suddenly a corporal hurried in, exclaiming, " They are shelling La Panne Hospital." Before he could get out another word every one at table sprang to his feet, and all exclaimed, " *Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! La Reine!* " For a few seconds there was sheer consternation, and then the N.C.O. could be heard saying, " Gentlemen, the Queen is safe ; she left the Hospital half an hour before the bombardment began." With a sigh of relief they almost collapsed into their chairs, and for a moment not a sound broke the silence.

I shall never forget my first impression of the Queen. I saw her walking from the farm-house to the cow-house which I had converted into a studio. The rumbling of thunder mingled with the boom of big guns in the direction of Ypres and the Messines Ridge, only a few miles away. It was raining hard, and the Queen was carrying an umbrella, quite unattended, and wearing the simplest of costumes—a grey cloth dress, the plainest of plain silk blouses, a

long cloth coat of warm material, and wound round her head a cream silk scarf with fringed ends. She came to where I was, and I felt a little embarrassment at having to ask her to enter the byre. After very gracious salutations I said I hoped she would pardon the liberty I took of using the " garage " rather than the house. " Mr. Speaight, is the light good there ? " " Your Majesty, it is excellent ; far better than in the house." " Then it is quite all right, if you are satisfied," she replied.

A few minutes later the King arrived, accompanied by Major (now General) Blanpain, Chief of the Secret Police. King Albert had come straight from the trenches, and was wearing his steel helmet, but without ribbons of any decoration on his khaki tunic. He would have looked no different from any other infantry officer had it not been for his superb carriage and commanding features. In spite of the simple uniform, these could only have belonged to a great ruler and leader of men.

There was something very human about this Royal couple : the Queen, for example, had noticed that I had forgotten to provide a mirror in my improvised studio, so when His Majesty arrived, rather tired and dishevelled, her first action was to brush his hair with her own hands and put his trench-coat straight for the photograph. After I had exposed a few plates the Queen noticed a weary look on her husband's face. She turned to me and said, " Have you nearly finished Mr. Speaight ? I am afraid the King is very tired." I replied that I was in Her Majesty's hands, but would like an opportunity to

take a few more pictures. Whereupon she looked round at her husband with a charming smile. "Would you like some tea, dear?" she said. "I am sure Mr. Speaight must be dying for his." The King willingly assented and she led him away, arranging that I should go off with Major Blanpain and meet them again at the studio twenty minutes later.

When they returned Prince Leopold accompanied them, and a few family groups were taken. He was a fine youth in the uniform of a private of the 12th Regiment of the Line. I had great trouble, though, in making Major Blanpain understand my French. I had not been permitted to bring an assistant with me, and Major Blanpain, the Chief of the Secret Police and himself a bit of an artist, had been pressed into service to hand me my plates and generally make himself useful. Unfortunately, he did not know a word of English. This the Queen quickly noticed and, realizing my difficulties, said, "Would you like me to act as your interpreter?" I gratefully accepted Her Majesty's offer, and work went forward as smoothly as clockwork. A swallow had her nest of young in the byre, and kept passing in and out attending to her brood regardless of the unusual proceedings.

That night I went to bed tired out and dismissed any feelings of fear at the thought of the calmness of the Royal Family about everything, as I watched from my bedroom window the endless flashes from the big guns across the horizon to the south-east.

Next morning, at the request of the Comte de Jehay (Chief of His Majesty's Cabinet, who, after

Grand Quartier Général de l'Armée Belge,
le 25 Septembre 1917.

Cabinet du Roi

Monsieur Richard N. Speaight.
157. New Bond Street.
London. W. 1.

Les membres des Maisons civile et militaire du Roi dont vous avez fait un groupe au Moerland le 2 Septembre dernier sont fort touchés de l'attention que vous avez eue d'offrir à chacun d'eux un exemplaire de cette belle photographie.

Elle s'est trouvée fort bien réussie. Ce magnifique spécimen de l'art photographique que sera pour eux un précieux souvenir. Ils en remercient bien sincèrement le photographe dont ils admirent le talent autant qu'ils lui sont reconnaissants de son amabilité.

A. Roy de Blicquy
Le Maréchal Prud'homme
Dupont
Blampain
H. de Jehay
Ruquoy
Le Vicomte de Beaufort Walcourt
Alex Meerstadelis

A Letter Autographed by the Members of King Albert's Cabinet

going through all the dangers of the Great War, was shortly afterwards killed while riding), I took a photograph of the Household on the grass in front of the farm-house. When I had taken this the Prime Minister, the Comte de Jehay turned to the Master of the Horse and said, " If you would not mind giving up your seat, I should like Mr. Speaight to have it." And I was duly photographed in his place. Later on he sent me a letter of appreciation of what I had done, signed by the whole Cabinet.

We then went on to the head-quarters, at La Panne, of the British Mission attached to the Belgian Army, the chief of which happened to be Brigadier-General the Earl of Athlone. I particularly wanted to make this picture, as I had only just heard that it was through H.R.H. the Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, that I had been selected to proceed to Belgium. But, on arriving, the Earl of Athlone told us it was no good coming inside, as the Germans had started shelling and they were on the move. " For heaven's sake be quick with the job," he laughingly said. " I want to get out of this." The photograph was taken quickly among the sand dunes, with shells dropping quite close to us. That same afternoon we left La Panne (at midday) and arrived in London in time for dinner, which shows the advantages of being on a King's service.

I had an amusing experience on the return journey, quick as it was. There was in the National Guard an officer I was rather up against. Owing to a strike of railway porters we had telegraphed to Victoria from the port of disembarkation to have a couple of

special men waiting our arrival to look after my numerous cases. Two policemen accompanied them to superintend matters. Naturally, the Railway Transport Officer at Victoria Station came trotting up, wondering who was coming. He stood at the salute at the carriage door to find that it was only his own private!

Shortly afterwards I received the following letter:

LE HAVRE,
le 23 Décembre, 1917

CHER MONSIEUR,

Je viens de recevoir le superbe portrait de notre Souverain, que vous avez bien voulu m'envoyer.

Laissez-moi vous adresser en même temps que mes vifs remerciements, mes plus sincères félicitations, pour l'oeuvre d'art que votre talent a si remarquablement créée.

Vous avez bien fixé dans l'image de notre Grand Roi toute l'énergie et toute la douleur de notre malheureux peuple.

C'est un document d'histoire.

Recevez, Cher Monsieur, l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

Le Ministre,
PAUL BERRYER

A MONSIEUR RICHARD N. SPEAIGHT,
157, New Bond Street,
London, W.

A little later H.M. the King of the Belgians was pleased to recognize my services by conferring upon me the Cross of Chevalier of the Order of Leopold II, and permission to wear this decoration has been graciously granted me by H.M. King George.

Hearing of the interest which H.M. the Queen of the Belgians was taking in the little children in the fighting areas I felt that I should like to help in a small way. It was suggested to me that I might raise some money for Her Majesty's Crèche Fund by an exhibition of the pictures I had just taken in Belgium. H.M. the King of the Belgians graciously gave permission and, in addition, autographed one of my portraits of him. Baron Moncheur, the Belgian Ambassador, opened the exhibition and was supported by many of the Belgian colony in London. This was His Excellency's first public appearance since the assumption of his duties as Ambassador. In the course of his opening remarks he mentioned that the Belgian Government had decided to use my portrait of the King in his steel helmet on the next issue of postage stamps, and that it was hoped to reproduce the same head upon the Belgian coins. At the close of the exhibition I received from the Private Secretary to H.M. the Queen of the Belgians a very gracious letter acknowledging our cheque for a hundred guineas towards her Crèche Fund, and expressing Her Majesty's appreciation of our efforts.

My next opportunity of seeing the King and Queen was when Countess Curzon of Kedleston arranged a charity concert at the Albert Hall, to be present at which their Majesties made a special journey to London. Bearing in mind the pathetic packets of seeds I had seen at Moëres, I asked permission to send a basket of flowers from our own garden. I knew the Queen liked garden flowers, and the basket was filled with delphiniums, pansies, and roses tied with

the Belgian colours. My wife had the privilege of placing the flowers in the Royal saloon.

A few days later I was immensely gratified to receive a letter " carrying out the commands of Her Majesty the Queen of the Belgians " to tell me how much touched she was, and how very beautiful she thought the exquisite flowers were, and the lovely and artistic case which held them. The letter went on to say that Her Majesty gave orders that the flowers were to be conveyed to Flanders by the *quickest* route—the one followed by the entourage—so that they would arrive in good order.

CHAPTER X

PHOTOGRAPHY IN WAR-TIME

Rush for photographs during the early stages of the war—The "Doughboys" in the studio—Materials requistioned for other than professional purposes—Difficulty in obtaining supplies—Britain rises to the occasion—Negatives sacrificed—Substitutes utilized—British lenses take the field—The photographer as quick-change artist—Peeps behind the scenes—The *padre* at the front—A rough diamond—The Armistice.

EARLY in 1918 the first batch of United States Army officers came to the studio. By that stage of the war British officers—I had noticed—were getting more and more tired looking and depressed on their brief returns from the Front. In the summer of 1914 it was for a different reason that they were unwilling to face the camera; after all, leave from the Front was so short that they grudged every minute of it. The American officers, on the other hand, were full of a delighted enthusiasm—what I believe they call "pep"—which recalled all the keenness of English officers in the first few weeks of the war. Their uniforms were fresh and smart and they were anxious to get to the Front and finish the war off as quickly as possible. Little did they realize how much longer the war was going to continue, and these same officers, when they came to me after they too had been to the Front, wore a far less jaunty appearance.

All through these memoirs I have tried to keep off

general topics and make them as much as possible studio memoirs. Neither do I wish to tire the reader by going too much into the technical side of photography, but doubtless few of the outside world realized the difficulty under which photographs were taken during the war. Never in the history of photography has there been such an abnormal demand for pictures; never has the photographer experienced such difficulties in obtaining materials. Not only were photographs wanted of the millions of men who went to the Front, but photography played a very important part in the war itself. The enormous amount of materials used by the men engaged professionally in photography was nothing compared to the enormous amount used by the Army, Navy and Air Force. England not only supplied materials for our own fighting forces, but also for our Allies. I have not all the figures before me, but during the war various manufacturers told me of orders received, the size of which was staggering. There are few industries which are more to be congratulated than that of the photographic manufacturers. They were certainly most successful in dealing with the situation.

Indeed, the full value of photography's contribution to the great victory will probably be fully realized only in a future generation, when the minor realities of the present have faded and the salient facts stand out in bold relief and true perspective. Some of us, however, had opportunities for studying facts at close quarters in those harassing days, and we have a shrewd idea of the means by which photo-

graphy came to the aid of G.H.Q. For the soldier and the officer who were so well served by photography had, like the general public, no knowledge of the actual obstacles which had to be surmounted at home before the needs of the nation could be satisfied with anything approaching efficiency.

One of the greatest difficulties was glass. Glass did not at first seem likely to become a source of anxiety. The great glassworks of England had furnished the bulk of the dry plate manufacturers' requirements, and the loss of the relatively small supplies of inferior glass which had reached this country from the Continent did not seem serious. But all this was changed when the news of the first gas attack arrived. Gas masks were called for, and in these gas masks two pieces of thin, colourless, flawless glass were needed for eye-pieces. This was just the glass needed for photographic work, and immediately a shortage of photographic glass made itself felt. What could the manufacturers do? They met together, and after long consultation decided that the only way to ensure the maintenance of stocks was to insist upon the return to the factory of old negatives before new plates were supplied. To their credit be it said that the professional photographers willingly made this sacrifice of their negatives, which represented in many cases a valuable item of their assets. For it was a great wrench to part with our stocks of old treasures, and I hardly like to say how many tens of thousands of them, many of real sentimental value, were sent by us to be ruthlessly stripped and recoated. I think I am near

the mark when I say that for each hundred new dry plates ordered we had to hand over fifty negatives from our files or from our throw-outs, if we were fortunate enough to have preserved them.

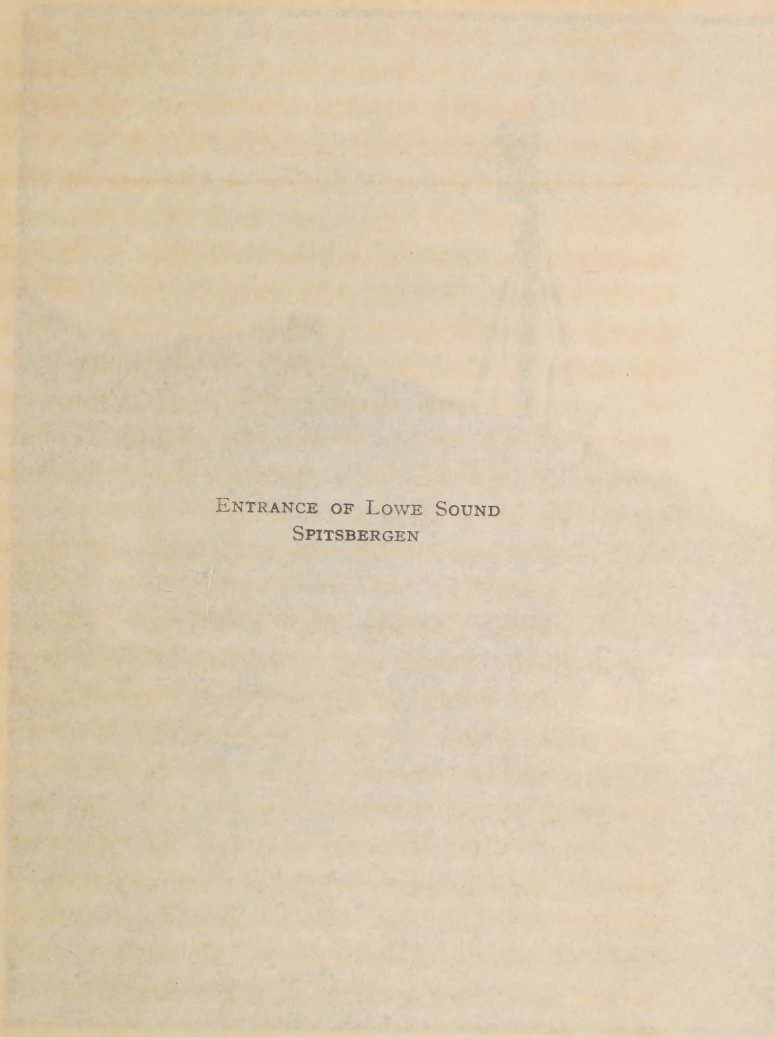
In the factories the work of cleaning this old glass presented countless difficulties. To the layman nothing seems more simple than to remove the gelatine from a photographic plate, but the degree of cleanliness necessary in photographic manufacture is so great that even the most elaborate installation failed to produce entirely satisfactory results. In certain cases the original image reappeared on the new negative, and for the first time in their lives some professional photographers produced in their studio "extras" which would have delighted the hearts of the Psychical Research Society had their origin been attributable to some less prosaic cause.

This was but one of the problems which daily confronted the manufacturers. While the armies in the field needed enormous supplies of glass plates the quantities of coated papers which they demanded were infinitely greater. It has been roughly estimated that the amount of this class of material turned out annually at that time was something like 40,000,000 square feet. It is an amazing figure, the significance of which we can the better appreciate when we realize the difficulties which blocked the way of those who needed paper as raw material. Up to that time the best paper bases had come from Germany and the South of France, and these sources of supply were, naturally, suddenly cut off. Thanks to the energy and resource of British manufacturers,

all the demands of the armies in the field and the photographic trade were met. There are, indeed, few industries which are more to be congratulated for their efficiency and resource during the war than that of the photographic manufacturers.

The story of the part played in the war by British lenses is quite as intriguing, and there is almost a flavour of romance about their victory over foreign rivals when both were submitted to the acid test of practical performance in the field. Prior to 1914 the faith in German lenses was so great that no photographer who cared for the good opinion of his fellows would dream of admitting that he did not possess at least one instrument of German manufacture. To fit a German lens to an English camera was a sure and certain way of enhancing its value very materially.

Everybody believed that the finest optical glass came from Jena, and the British Government, sharing the common superstition, forthwith on the outbreak of war commandeered every German lens of respectable focus length in the country, leaving the professional photographers to carry on with the "inferior" British instruments. As the war proceeded there became noticeable a subtle change in the attitude of the War Office towards the neglected British lenses. They began to call up the home-made article, and British lens factories were put on full time turning out anastigmats at high pressure. The British lenses had beaten the German lenses in the field as the allied armies were beating their foes on the battle-grounds of Europe. The old super-



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stition of the supremacy of the German lens over the British lens was exploded for all time.

I will here relate a little tale of fact which will bring home to the reader how, by isolated experiences, the superstition to which I have referred was rapidly dispersed. I was in the Arctic in 1919 with some old campaigners, when we got our first sight of seals on icebergs. We valued our binoculars as very dear friends, and were discussing how far we could see. Up to this time the men who could see farthest had German field-glasses, but I put my glasses up and said, " I can see so and so." They looked at me in amazement and asked, " What glasses are those you have ? Where did you get them from ? " I replied that I had bought them just before the expedition and was proud to say that they were of British make throughout.

An interesting consideration, and one of the greatest importance, evolves from the facts which I have tried to narrate. Without being fully conscious of the fact, we could before the war make glass, paper base, and optical glasses of precision of the finest quality. The exigencies of the war stimulated the energies and resource of our manufacturers, who left no stone unturned to discover the secrets of real success. Many a day did I spend in the laboratories of one of their number offering what suggestions I could for the improvement of their products. Others were calling in outside aid in the same way. The result of this seeking after efficiency was, as might be expected, remarkable. Industrial efficiency—I refer at this moment to the photographic and

allied industries more particularly—has reached such a point that we are now not only almost self-contained, but, I am proud to say, more efficient and more enterprising than our foreign rivals.

Yes, there were all sorts of difficulties in connexion with war-time photography. On one occasion the Duke of York came into the studio and saw a picture of his brother the Prince of Wales. He turned to me and said, " I did not know that my brother had been photographed again." I said, " He has not, Your Royal Highness." " But," he said, " he had not this ribbon the last time he was photographed." I smiled and said, " No. At these times it is very difficult for His Royal Highness to spare the time to be photographed, and as it is necessary to keep the picture up to date, from time to time we have to add a fresh ribbon on the negatives when a fresh decoration has been gazetted." " But what about my stripes ? " he exclaimed. " Certainly, sir," I replied, " with pleasure I will have your negative altered."

He was much interested and said he would like to know how it was done. So we went up into the studio, where the girls, with fine surgical knives and microscopically sharp pencils, were working on the plates. He told me that he would like to see his done. I said, " Well, sir, I am afraid you might make the young lady nervous, and I should not like to spoil your plate, but here is a spoilt plate, and if you will tell the young lady what decoration you would like put on, she will show you how it is done."

Then again promotions were so rapid that many a boy was taken as second lieutenant and the same

uniform was used when he became captain, and was again altered to that of major, before his face had had time to change. It was no unusual thing during the war for a man to write from the Front and say, "Please send a picture to So-and-So. Kindly note that I am now major. I shall be very glad if you will alter my uniform accordingly." The most altered photograph of all was one of the Prince, first showing him as a lieutenant in mourning and then as a captain with the mourning band removed and two extra decorations on the breast.

Many titled women whose last photograph I had taken either in a Court or a ball gown now came in the simple but becoming uniform of a Red Cross nurse. One lady in particular I well remember; it was Lady Wavertree with her beautiful white hair. She was one of the many hundreds who gave up all their pleasures and turned their homes into hospitals. This reminds me of how I went down to a very old client in the country who had turned her house into a hospital for the soldiers and was anxious to have a group taken. It was at the time when the petrol difficulty was at its highest, and the house was some ten miles from the station. Practically the only means of communication between the house and the station was the ambulance, which went backwards and forwards daily for fresh patients and supplies. I could hardly come under the category of a patient, nor that of food commodities; all the same I travelled this ten miles inside a closed ambulance.

One day during the war that veteran soldier the late General Sir Francis Lloyd came in accompanied

by two nurses and a group of ambulance men—those splendid men who were working hard all day at business, and at night were carrying wounded from the stations to the hospitals. I thought it was a kindly act of Sir Francis to spare time to be photographed in their midst.

It is said that doctors and clergymen know many secrets which are never divulged, but photographers also get many peeps behind the scenes and are often confronted with situations of a most embarrassing nature. In peace time I had often been intrigued by experiences like the one following, when a client came in and ordered a miniature of herself to be fitted into a cigarette case, at the same time telling me very plainly she did not wish her husband to know anything about it. Hardly had she left the studio, when the husband came in and gave an order for a miniature of himself to go inside a small vanity case, and he also gave very explicit instructions that his wife was to know nothing about it. With this sort of commission on hand one is always afraid that something may happen and the secret which is not one's own be given away.

The following Christmas a similar episode occurred, but this time with a much sweeter thought. One morning a gentleman came in and ordered a large coloured picture of his little girl as a surprise Christmas present for his wife, and again he had hardly left the studio before his wife came in with a similar request as a Christmas present for her husband. I was at a loss to know what to do ; it would not have been fair to have divulged what the husband was

doing, while on the other hand, I did not think it was fair to let them order two pictures precisely the same. Never have I worked harder to persuade anyone to have something different, but finally I succeeded in persuading one of them to have a miniature in place of the coloured picture. When the secret came out at Christmas they were both very pleased at the way in which I had guarded their Christmas gifts and called together to thank me for what I had done.

During the war my peeps behind the scenes were of a different nature. It was the photographer who learnt what was really going on before almost anyone else. A constant stream of officers fresh from the front lines and from head-quarters poured into the studio ; each of them seemed to unburden some little tit-bit. Much of it now is not worth repeating, though at the time, if it had been possible to publish it, the newspapers would have given various items a position on the front page. Some, however, are still worth recording.

I remember an officer one day told me how he had been driving with the Prince, when the Prince told him of an amusing conversation he had overheard between two tommies. As he approached them he heard the words " Buckingham Palace." His curiosity aroused, he listened for a moment. " Blimy," said one of them, " guarding Buckingham Palace was bad enough, but this 'ere is a —— sight worse." Whereupon the Prince tapped him on the shoulder and said to the astonished man, " I quite agree, I would far sooner be inside Buckingham Palace

myself than out here." Another officer told me that when he was motoring one day between St. Pol and Doullens his car broke down at a level crossing. He was in a great hurry to get to his destination and was naturally glad to see another car approaching, though at a high speed. He hurried out into the middle of the road, waved his arms, and as the car skidded to a stop he called out in broken French " Me, St. Pol. Auto cassée." There were four people in the car, including a woman. " All right," said the latter in perfect English, " jump in behind." It was not until he had gone several hundred yards that he realized that the chauffeur was the King of the Belgians, and the lady he had taken for a nurse Queen Elizabeth.

In an earlier chapter I spoke of the self-consciousness of clergy when being photographed either in their surplice or more elaborate vestments. What a different picture did the *padre* make, hardly distinguishable as he was from the ordinary soldier! They were fine men, and what stories they could tell!

I remember one *padre*, who had been working at a Y.M.C.A. canteen in Flanders, telling me how one evening, when he was serving out coffee and cakes, a very rough man came in from some Labour battalion. He said he would not shock me by quotations from this man's vocabulary. It happened to be very wet weather, and this particular *padre's* hut looked like getting swamped, so he left the canteen to go out and dig a fresh trench round it. This rough tommy, on going back to camp, saw him hard at work with his

spade, knee-deep in mud. Turning to him he asked, "What are you doing with that spade, guv'nor? That's not your job." And he insisted then and there on taking the spade from him and turned to and carried on with the job. Later on the *padre* was chatting one evening with a young officer of the same battalion and their talk veered round, as so often, to the men, and in particular to the driver who had cleared the mud from that trench. "Yes," said his officer, "he's a bit rough in some ways, but in an emergency he is one of the best," and he went on to tell how one misty November morning beyond Ypres, as they were taking up a limber full of shells, a whizz-bang came over and blew the mules to wherever the bad mules go, and upset the limber in the muddy track. For the moment the men were so dazed that it seemed impossible to rouse them to the needful action—they just hung limp. Then from under the overturned cart came a raucous voice singing, "Pack all your troubles in your old kit bag, and smile, —— yer, smile!" The effect was instantaneous. With a great laugh the men buckled to and once again got on with the job.

I often used to ask the officers who came to the studio whether they had met the Prince of Wales while they were out there. A surprising number of them had. One of the best anecdotes I heard about him was from a subaltern, who told me that he was standing just outside his dugout after the Germans put a barrage down, when hurrying towards him came a young staff officer followed by a panting major. "Want to shelter?" said the

young man. The Red Tab poked his head in the dugout and without much ado he withdrew it again quickly. " Not good enough," he vouchsafed and disappeared down the communicating trench followed by his labouring companion. It was only when he saw the retreating figures that it suddenly flashed upon the subaltern that his hurried visitor was our very human Prince.

At last came the Armistice. Early that afternoon I was going along Carlton House Terrace when I saw coming towards me Lord Balfour and Lord Robert Cecil. I went up to them and shook hands, and said, " Surely on this occasion we ought to have a souvenir before we part ? " " Yes," said Lord Balfour, " what do you want ? " I did not know what to say. So I said, " I should like to have your autograph, sir." " What am I to write it on ? " I had a brain-wave and took out a one pound note and said, " What could be better, sir, than across the Houses of Parliament ? " He accordingly wrote on it. Lord Robert said, " Am I not in this ? " I handed it back to him, and Lord Robert signed his name across it too. People might wonder why the souvenir did not take the form of a snapshot, but " to hell with photography that day ! " I just did not care if I never exposed another film, nor, on the other hand, did I feel that day that I really wanted to celebrate the occasion with riotous eating and drinking. Certainly, I was at first hardly conscious of what I was doing, but as the afternoon grew to a close my thoughts went back to what I had seen, to what I had heard, and the miseries brought by the Great

War. I went home early to my wife and fireside, too full of thanks that the Great War was over, and overflowing with gratitude that we, personally, had been spared the sadness which many of our friends had endured. I have never been able to look upon Armistice Day as a day of riotous rejoicing. To me it has always been one of thanksgiving.

CHAPTER XI

AFTER THE WAR

A boom in photography—The photographer confronted with fresh difficulties—Art menaced by conditions of modern life—Short skirts *versus* artistic gowns—" Make-up " defeats its own ends—One photographer's drastic remedy—Effect of cinema photography—Some American sitters—Their ease and natural grace—The home at Clivedon—Lady Astor lends a hand—Visits to Highclere—Lady Carnarvon takes time by the forelock and plays the part of Santa Claus—Tribute of manufacturers and photographers to one another.

I WILL not say that our business became immediately normal after the war. During the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919, everything was in a state of flux. Money was spent like water in photography, as in every other luxury trade. Nothing seemed to matter. Business was in a most peculiar condition. There were wild extravagances on all sides, just as after the Franco-German War.

I have referred several times to the inartistic effect on photography caused by modern fashions. It became more and more apparent just after the war. Skirts became shorter, make-up more general, more town houses were turned into flats, and every one grew more restless. Just as Lucretia's mode of life destroyed much of the beauty of Andrea del Sarto's later paintings of her as a Madonna by the dissatisfied hard look which it produced on her face, so

the restless lives led by many Society women of to-day make it difficult to obtain pleasing photographs of them.

I have already said how hopeless it is to attempt a full length portrait of " mother and child " when skirts are so short. That is a great pity, for nothing is more beautiful than a happy mother with her child playing round her knees. Then again, the mothers dance so late that they do not feel at their best next morning—the time when their children, refreshed by healthy slumber, would naturally look at their best. To-day some mothers want to look as though they were their debutante daughters, and indeed a certain amount of clever touching up can produce this result. But who will say that two "sisters," one of whom is really the mother, are as attractive a sight as the same pair would be if each were content frankly to dress and look like her real self ? However, every rule has its exceptions, and my readers must not imagine that at the present day it is impossible to produce a happy photograph of a mother with her children. When there is a bond of affection between them, the most inartistic of fashions are unable to prevent this affection from revealing itself in the photograph. I am reproducing one or two recent family groups, which, I think, show that this is true.

If only every photographer had the courage of Herr Schieberth of Vienna ! I was asking him the other day how he managed to make his women look so beautiful and natural despite their reputation for excessive make-up.

" Oh ! " he said with a smile, " I make them wash it off first."

" That must take a lot of doing," I replied.

" Yes, perhaps. But with the Viennese art comes first, and when I explain the situation to them they are quite docile."

Mind you, a slight pencilling of the eyebrows, slight darkening of the lashes is often effective. My complaint is against the slabs of lipstick, powder, and rouge. I suppose that women have heard so much about the need of make-up for successful cinema photography that they imagine it is also necessary in the studio. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

I am always interested when I see in my appointment book the name of a client who is of American origin. Few women make better sitters than Americans who have married into the English aristocracy. Perhaps it is because we get the cream of America here, not only on account of their beauty and grace, but also of natural ease of manner ? Above all, though, they are noticeable for their great consideration for the artist.

On several occasions I have been down to Cliveden to photograph Lady Astor and her family. On the last occasion it happened to be the day when the whole of the household staff were having a fête in the grounds. I chose one of the terraces and wanted some furniture moved. Lady Astor said, " We cannot call the staff ; we must do it ourselves." So Lord Astor, Lady Astor, and myself did the whole work. There was nobody more active than Lady

Astor. When it was over, we went back to the house and chatted for a little while. Soon Lady Astor looked out of doors and noticed a car. " Is that your car, Mr. Speaight ? There are some people inside." I then acknowledged that it was my wife and son. " What are they doing there ? " she asked, and out she went and asked them in to tea. Suddenly she said, " Now, I have done a silly thing. There is no tea." But there was a gorgeous basket of fruit, and she asked my wife to make herself at home and look after her " good man." She laugingly said, " Now your wife is here, you may like to visit the house, but I should not have trusted you alone. Show Mrs. Speaight my bedroom, if you can find it." I knew perfectly well where it was ; from an earlier visit, ten years before, I had recollections of one of the most beautifully panelled Jacobean rooms I had ever seen, in which I had photographed Lady Astor and her children. Especially I remembered a golden basket beside her bed with a vine of growing grapes.

Another delightful sitter is the young Lady Carnarvon, who was Miss Catherine Wendell, the daughter of Mrs. Wendell of New York. When the present Lord Carnarvon was a baby, I used to pay regular visits to " Highclere." This was before the late Lord Carnarvon (whose fame as an amateur photographer was only second to his fame as an archæologist) had built his beautiful studio, and I certainly felt thrilled, on my return, after a lapse of twenty years, to work in the studio in which many of his famous photographs had been taken.

The last time I was at " Highclere " was in the late autumn, and I was much interested to see that they had already been preparing the Christmas presents for the children. In the studio I noticed two small bicycles which had to be hidden before Lord Porchester came in—he was only a tiny tot. Evidently his parents believed in shopping early, according to the newspapers' slogan. The present Lord Carnarvon is one of the proudest fathers I have ever met, and more devoted parents than Lord and Lady Carnarvon would be difficult to find. And not only are they proud of their children, but—which is still more important—they also have their confidence. In these days of high-tension living and lack of responsibility of parents towards children, it is always pleasant to see any signs of real intimacy between parents and their children.

Lady Carnarvon's fondness for children is shown not only in her love for her own children, but also in the way she looks after those on the estate. A few days before Christmas she was in my studio, and told me that she had just completed buying her last toys for the village children, who, I believe, numbered over two hundred. In order not to repeat her gifts of the previous year the children had been instructed to write to her and tell her what they would like, and she told me that not one of them would be disappointed in their request. It is that attitude of landowners to their tenants which makes it so sad a spectacle to see great estates everywhere being split up in England. Surely it is an example of feudalism in its best form, when the lords of the

manor feel responsibility for, as well as receive the services of, their tenants.

But to return to 1919. In the summer of that year my wife gave a garden-party at our home in Buckinghamshire. This time it was not for the wounded soldiers, but for our staff, who had worked so valiantly during the war. We also took the opportunity of inviting the heads or managers of the various manufacturing firms who had worked so splendidly throughout the war. The outing was a great success, and the following notice from one of the trade papers sums up the situation better than I can express it myself :

There was ample evidence of that good relationship between employers and employed at a garden-party recently given at Mr. Richard Speaight's charming country house at Beaconsfield. The gathering consisted of the assistants of Messrs. Speaight Limited and a few privileged business friends of the firm. Mr. Speaight's house and his delightful grounds are admirably suited for a gathering of this kind, and it must be said that Mr. Speaight has that natural aptitude for making his visitors happy, and that Mrs. Speaight has all the attributes of the perfect hostess. Very little time was devoted to speech-making, but Mr. Speaight took the opportunity of expressing in a few words his gratitude—and, as he said, what ought to be the gratitude of the whole body of professional photographers—for the manner in which photographic manufacturers had stood by the profession during the most trying period through which they had just passed. Mr. Speaight reminded his hearers that before the war 95 per cent of photographic material came from Germany, and that in August, 1914, the whole of this

supply was suddenly cut off. The manufacturers were faced not only with the difficulty of securing raw material which had previously been drawn from Germany, but with the additional difficulty of meeting huge orders which were urgently wanted by the Government. In spite of all these difficulties, the manufacturers kept the Government supplied and kept the professional photographers going. Professional photographers had their difficulties and their troubles, but, as Mr. Speaight pointed out, these were small compared with the difficulties and troubles which the manufacturers had to contend with during this anxious time."

CHAPTER XII

EXPEDITION TO SPITSBERGEN

Fresh fields and pastures new—The Northern Exploration Company—Herbert Ponting and myself accompany expedition to Spitsbergen as official photographers—*Mal de mer*—Tall stories—Life on board the *Sheelah*—Tromsö—Cream cakes and champagne—Bovril prevents that sinking feeling—Beatty's men celebrate their master's earldom—A Lapland picture—"Necessity is the mother of invention"—Thoughtful sons—Acrobatic feats—The only woman on Spitsbergen—Frank Wilde—The midnight sun—Exhibition in Bond Street—Meeting with Rosita Forbes.

THE most adventurous and unusual commission I ever had came to me in 1919, about the middle of July. A client, while being photographed in the studio, suddenly asked me what plans I had made for my summer holidays. I told him I had just arranged to go to Devonshire with my wife and son. "Well," he interposed, "that is rather a tame place. Why don't you see life? You have been in a groove too long, you men who stay at home. Come up to the Arctic with me."

Now it is all very well for anyone who has spent his life living quietly at home with an occasional comfortable visit to the Continent to be pounced upon at a moment's notice and asked to go to the Arctic. It wants a little bit of consideration, especially when a man expects the answer then and there. However I thought there might be something in the suggestion, so, instead of turning it down,

I laughingly said that I wanted to think it over. "Right you are," was the reply. "If you think further about it, come and see me the day after to-morrow."

That night, after dinner, I mentioned the matter, half-jokingly, to my wife. She at once realized the possibilities which such a commission would afford me and put no obstacles in my way; in fact, she even urged me to accept the offer. On Thursday morning I arrived at London Wall for my interview with Mr. Salisbury-Jones, and after a short discussion we reached a satisfactory arrangement. When the business was concluded, I asked him for some information about the general object of the expedition and my own particular duties. He replied that it was intended to explore the mineral possibilities of Spitsbergen, and that this chief task was being undertaken by the two experts W. Selkirk and G. W. Boise. The well-known Arctic photographer Herbert Ponting was accompanying them to photograph the geographical structure of the land, while my own duties would be to record events of topical interest and to take any pictures in which figure studies were necessary.

So again I had to set to and get apparatus ready for foreign travel. But this time it was very different from previous occasions. Everything was new to me. I realized that I was being paid a big fee and that my reputation was at stake, so I went round to those of my colleagues who I knew had had experience in this type of photography, and obtained from them all the information I required

regarding the apparatus most suitable for Arctic work.

We finally sailed for the Arctic on August 3, 1919. My fellow-passengers included Mr. and Mrs. Salisbury-Jones, Lady Barbara Smith, Sir Harry Brittain, General Mullens, Lady Mullens, Doctor Cathcart Bruce (hon. ship's doctor), Patrick Hannen, the experts, a Great Dane, and two bull terrier pups. For the first few miles we had to keep close to the coast to avoid minefields and, bad sailor as I am, I was able to survive. The second day I succumbed. The ship, which was Admiral Beatty's private yacht, the *Sheelah*, was quite tiny and soon started rocking. My plight was made worse by the fumes of the chemicals and the stuffy atmosphere of the miniature dark room, in which I closeted myself early and foolishly in my enthusiasm to develop my first plates. I was so bad that on the third day I came under the doctor's care.

Our first stop was Bergen. Fortunately, I recover quickly from *mal de mer*, and even drank champagne at dinner on the night we arrived. It was my first visit to Norway, and I went sightseeing like any Cook's tourist. At lunch we were joined by a Captain Wentworth, who told us that he was going to Spitsbergen to peg out claims by aeroplane. I asked him to let me go up with him, but the aeroplane never arrived: so that was that. As I was still feeling none too well, I heard with horror the story of a skipper who sailed with supplies to Spitsbergen for the Russian colony there, drank the alcohol out of the magnetic compass, circum-

navigated the island three times, and never got there at all.

Frantzen, the pilot, told us confidently that there was a coal deposit 6,365 cm. thick on the east coast of Spitsbergen, and that valleys ran along to the west coast which could easily carry light railways. He said, too, that if any evidence of volcanic action could be found at Spitsbergen, we might even discover diamonds. How optimistic we all were in those early days! It all depended, he said, on temperature and pressure.

My chief impression of the outward voyage of the Northern Exploration Company, Limited, was the Ritz-Carlton cooking and the elaborate ritual of evening dress—weather permitting. Lady Barbara Smith was the only person who never missed a meal. She was as good a sailor as I was a bad one. Sir Harry Brittain was the life and soul of the party. He made all the official speeches and sang songs whenever he had a chance. He also never minded figuring in my photographs.

At Tromsö we were taken to a great house and given nothing but gigantic cream cakes and as much champagne as we could drink. The result was partially disastrous, the rarefied air and the fact that we had had no breakfast making us uncommonly hilarious. Never again have I eaten cream cakes washed down by champagne on an empty stomach! Moreover, we had a really dirty passage to Spitsbergen. For two days no one put in an appearance at all. On the third day I was sitting outside my cabin with icebergs all round the ship,

when the steward brought round the morning cocktails. There was nothing I wanted less.

" Take it away," I said, " and bring me a cup of Bovril."

He did so, and who should come along but Sir Harry Brittain ?

" What have you got there ? " he asked curiously.

I told him and he called the others. " Speaight's having Bovril. Speaight is right. We will all have Bovril," he said.

Much excitement was caused on the outward voyage when we heard that Lord Beatty had had his earldom conferred upon him. The whole of the ship's crew were Beatty's own men, and the captain had been with him throughout the war ; so they all had champagne served out, which they drank in pint mugs. No one was ever cheered more loudly in his absence than Lord Beatty by his ship's crew.

One of the most artistic portraits I have ever taken, and certainly the most unique, was that of an old Laplander whom I photographed at Tromsö, the last port of call before Spitsbergen. This is how it happened. I looked into a tent in a Lapland encampment and saw a wrinkled old beldame smoking a pipe and squatting on the floor in front of a fire. With my figure blocking up the entrance, the only light came from the hole in the top of the tent. I at once saw the possibilities of a really fine picture, and realized that Rembrandt himself would have been pleased with the lighting effect. (As you will have noticed in many of his pictures, there is a high top light). And, too, she had a typically Rembrandt

face. She was rugged and dirty and dressed in shabby deerskin. "Goodness," I thought, "here is a chance of a lifetime. She doesn't need posing. She doesn't need altering. It's a gift from heaven."

I naturally did not know a word of her language; nor did I care. I just crouched there, blocking up the aperture. If I ever used psychology I used it then. I positively mesmerized the old hag into remaining motionless long enough for a time exposure. I was half suffocated by the fumes of her foul pipe and the steaming wood fire; but it was worth it. It could only have been done in the circumstances in which it took place. In Bond Street it would have been impossible. Here, in the Arctic, the setting was naturally perfect and perfectly natural.

The following extract from the diary of our popular ship's doctor, Dr. Cathcart Bruce, conveys an interesting impression of this incident of the Laplanders as it appeared to other eyes—and those very observant:

So the party wended its way along a path through the thin birchwood up the valley and presently came on a Lapp tent of canvas and sacking spread over poles with a hole in the roof to allow the smoke to escape. Old Father Christmas, a venerable old gentleman (who owned to seventy years but did not know how many more), then appeared, dressed in reindeer skins with puttees and moccassins called finneskoo. He had a face coloured and wrinkled like a Normandy pippin, was playing with a plump, soft puppy. Presently we all got over the wire fence, and he and his wife, still more picturesque, and a son-in-law were

induced to come out and be grouped for a photograph. They talked in a high, thin voice, a sort of sing-song, but on promise of payment were most obliging. Speaight and Ponting were on them like flies on a bit of meat, and had a number of pictures soon knocked off. The old patriarch then led us up the valley, about a quarter of a mile to another tent, where a young woman and five children and another old grannie lived. Here S. and P. had a hustling time, with Mr. Knudsen's help grouping the women and children in front of the tent and, the light being brighter here in the open, hit the target every time with their machine guns. It was amusing to see Speaight, with his gun at the carry, striding about to look at the group and then spreading himself for a sighting shot. An alteration in the stance of one or other was made and then a quick whirr and a click and the affair was finished. He also went inside the tent and took a Lapp interior and many other family groups.

At long last we came to Spitsbergen, where I took another really remarkable photograph. I had gone over to the wireless station and made friends with the three young operators. Soon they asked me whether I could photograph the interior of their hut. I said I could and then realized that I had been caught napping and, in fact, had left my flash-lamp behind. I was determined, however, not to be defeated.

"Look here," I said, "have you got any flares to signal with in case of emergencies?"

"Certainly," one of them replied; "we have the official flares."

"Well, when I say 'Go,' light one behind the camera, and keep it going for as long as I tell you."

We were all ready to start when suddenly one of them shouted, " Is that back wall going to appear in the picture ? " I told him that it was, and at this he added : " Then for heaven's sake wait a minute and take away those drawings. We are going to send the photos back to our parents."

They were duly removed and family photographs installed. Finally I took one of the most difficult photographs of my career. It was as difficult to gauge the actinic value of the flare as it was in my first experience of stage photography at the Prince of Wales Theatre thirty years before. Intuition and luck combined to make me choose the correct exposure, and I was able to send each of their parents effective photographs of their lonely sons' home in the Arctic.

Quite a large proportion of the pictures taken on this Spitsbergen expedition will always have a special interest for me, not only as records of scenes in a remote land, but also by reason of the very difficult conditions under which some of them were taken. At times it was necessary to perform almost acrobatic feats in order to get myself and my camera into the right position to photograph some particularly striking scene or incident. Perhaps the most outstanding instance of this kind is the picture I took of the thrilling pursuit and recovery of a small boat which had gone adrift from the sealer in which we were approaching Axel Island at the mouth of Lowe Sound. A heavy sea was running at the time, when a sudden cry and the rush of feet on deck drew our attention to the fact that the painter had snapped.

The skipper and one of the hands flung themselves into another small boat and went after the truant craft. I realized the opportunity for a unique picture. But in order to accomplish this it was essential that I should somehow get down as near as possible to the rough and tumbled sea. This meant lying spreadeagled over the bows of the sealer while two pairs of willing hands held my feet. I have taken worse photographs both technically and artistically in my London studio. (See picture facing page 168).

My next client was Mrs. Gilson, a charming Canadian, who had helped to keep her husband's vigil during the three black months when the sun never appears above the horizon—a devoted wife and, incidentally, the only woman on Spitsbergen. The next time I saw her was at the Ritz in London—rather a contrast to the shack in which she had spent the winter.

One of the most memorable experiences of this Spitsbergen voyage was, of course, the glory of the Midnight Sun. To photograph this I tried, but photography has its limitations, a fact which I never realized more keenly than on this occasion. To depict that wonderful scene in words is quite beyond my power, so I again resort to a pen-picture from the log of our ship's doctor :

Then sat and watched a magnificent sunset glowing in the North behind the range of mountains. "A sea of glass mingled with fire," and later it lit up with golden fire the wreaths of mist gathering round our nearer hills. I am

writing this at 11.30 p.m. with the sun dazzling my eyes.

The beauty of the golden mist which irradiates with purple tints along the mountains bounding the distant fjord is that of a land of Faëry, and perhaps could only be matched in the Isle of Patmos and described by the Evangelist of the Apocalypse. I hang up in Memory's Gallery and on the line my most precious masterpiece. And so I saw the Midnight Sun !

While we were at Spitsbergen the sun never set at all. I have never been a great lover of late hours, and was not specially pleased with my appointment as honorary loader for 2 a.m. duck shooting. Some of the party never seemed to go to bed at all, but then they were not working all day as I was. So I was not sorry when we finally sailed for home, delighted though I was with the saxifrage and other alpine flowers—far more interesting than the coal or asbestos which we had gone to explore. Before I left, however, I had the pleasure of meeting Frank Wilde, the famous explorer, who has been a friend of mine ever since. He is the most modest man of my acquaintance. From the way he talks you would scarcely believe that he had ever crossed to the Isle of Wight ! He, too, was there for the Northern Exploration Company, but left them soon afterwards.

On my return, by arrangement with the Northern Exploration Company, I held an exhibition at our galleries in Bond Street of the pictures taken during the expedition. Before a large and distinguished gathering Sir Martin Conway opened the Exhibition,

which remained open all through November and December and attracted a very large number of people.

There was an amusing sequel to the Exhibition. I unexpectedly received an invitation to a banquet given by the Ladies' Lyceum Club, and found myself placed at the high table, in the company of many distinguished travellers, and with no less a person than Rosita Forbes on my right hand.

CHAPTER XIII

BELGIUM REVISITED

Second visit to Belgium—Brussels minus metal—Their Majesties at Laeken—The little lioness of Belgium—The Spanish Ambassador—A tragic story—The French President—A disappointment—My third visit to Belgium—Studio at the Hôtel Astoria—A fourth visit—Our own King and Queen in Belgium—A garden-party at Laeken—Royalty before the camera—A race against time—A friend in need—The King and Queen of Spain—Captive princes—A brother photographer—King Albert in Brussels—A difference of opinion—Who was right ?

FOR some time I had been nursing a hope that I would again have the privilege of photographing the King and Queen of the Belgians, and when Comte William de Grünn came in one day and discussed my last visit to Belgium I told him of my hope. He said he would try and arrange this for me, and shortly after I received a letter saying that their Majesties would be graciously pleased to give me a sitting, if I could go over early in the New Year while the Royal children were at home, and take a family group. I saw the Comte de Grünn several times about the arrangements, and he kindly gave me letters of introduction to a number of his friends, who, he said, would be sure to want me to photograph them while I was in Belgium.

On January 4, 1920, I left England, accompanied by my wife, for my return visit to Belgium. How different it seemed from my journey of 1917 ! Then

I went unknown, but now, on my arrival in Brussels, I was astonished to find my war photograph of the King and Queen everywhere, on anything from postage stamps to chocolate boxes. Photographers, too, had pirated them and made enlargements. Never, I think, have any pictures been so much pirated. It was estimated that, in one way or another, many thousands of pounds must have been made from them. This did not worry me, for I realized that, though the original had been done by an Englishman, it had been done for the benefit of Belgium, and so it was only right that Belgium should profit by it.

I cannot say how I thought I would find Brussels, but certainly I imagined it would be much altered. It was less than fifteen months since the Armistice had been signed, and the devastated country we had passed through from Ostend made one ready to expect anything. But from outward appearance the capital seemed quite normal. It was only when one looked more carefully that one began to realize what the city had undergone. For instance, there was a complete absence of metal. Door handles, finger plates, brass caps, and even column bases were missing ; indeed, every possible scrap of metal had been removed. The hotel we stayed in, the Astoria, was no exception to the rule, although this had at times been the Kaiser's head-quarters during the war. Even the metal base of the massive granite portico had been taken away.

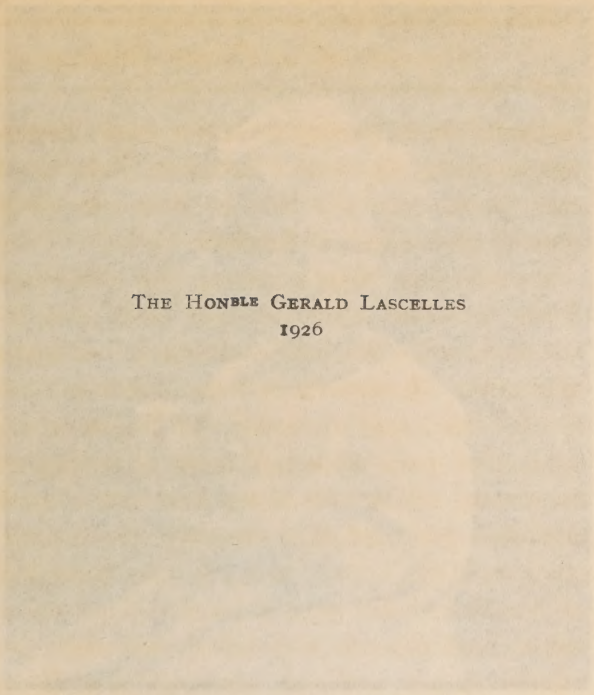
I was delighted to find awaiting me a letter from the Queen's secretary, arranging for me to go to

Laeken, their beautiful home near Brussels, which corresponds to our Hampton Court. The King and Queen rarely reside in Brussels, preferring the beauty and quiet of Laeken.

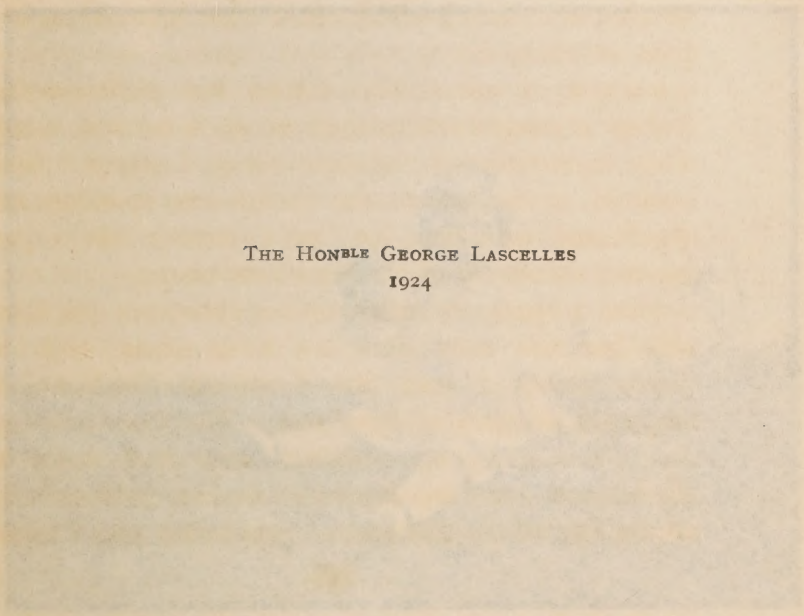
I could not help noticing the difference between these peaceful surroundings and the little farm-house near La Panne in which I had last seen their Majesties. Everywhere was contrast. Then both looked tired and anxious; the Queen in a plain grey coat, had just returned from a trying visit to the hospitals, while the King had come straight from the trenches and was wearing his trench coat and steel helmet. But now, in the beautiful château of Laeken there was a happy expression on their faces, and though the King was still dressed in a simple khaki uniform without any decoration on his breast, the Queen's clothes were truly regal, for she wore a superb cloak of rich brocade over a dress of white silk.

Laeken is admirably suited for photography. It has a magnificent range of glass-houses, which were favourites of the late King Leopold. King Leopold, as one knows, was a man who spent money like water, and here he had certainly left a permanent memento of his luxurious tastes.

After a happy morning taking groups of the King with his two sons, and the King alone, and the Queen alone, I met the Comtesse Ghislaine de Caraman Chimay at luncheon. The Countess was the Queen's lady-in-waiting, and had been in attendance on Her Majesty almost continuously during the war. She was a great artist and I found



THE HONBLE GERALD LASCELLES
1926



THE HONBLE GEORGE LASCELLES
1924

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THE HONBLE GERALD LASCELLES. 1926.

THE HONBLE GEORGE LASCELLES. 1924.

her advice very helpful. On the way to lunch I noticed the beautiful marble staircase, and could not help feeling what a splendid setting this would make for a group portrait. The Countess readily agreed and said she would see whether their Majesties were engaged after lunch. If not, she said, she would ask them if they could spare time to sit for another group. Then Miss Hammersley, the English governess to Princess Marie-José suggested that we should ask the Queen to change her dress for a delightful blue and silver one, which had been so much admired at a State function the night before.

All went well, and their Majesties expressed themselves willing to have this group taken on the staircase. An amusing incident happened after I had taken the picture. Princess Marie-José, who, owing to her glorious mass of hair, has often been called "the little lioness of Belgium," climbed up on to one of the lions at the side of the staircase; the Queen noticed her and said, "Oh, Mr. Speaight, that is where I should like my daughter taken. Is it possible?" I replied, "Yes, Your Majesty, if I can have a high pair of steps on which to stand."

They were soon procured, and as I was perched on these steps, using a reflex camera, which I always take with me for emergencies, the Queen looked up at me.

"Can you stay there a little longer?" she asked.

I did not realize quite what she meant, but naturally answered in the affirmative. "Then I will send for my camera, for I should like to photograph you on the top of the steps."

It was all delightfully informal, with the Queen calling to me to give her directions as to where to stand and what exposure to give. Then Prince Charles thought he would like to take some photographs, and Miss Hammersley brought her camera. I think in the end about five cameras were at work and every one was asking me questions at the same time as to what to do. After a number of plates had been exposed and I was starting to pack up, the Queen turned and said that she would like to take a picture of my wife and myself with the children. It was a kind and thoughtful act and, needless to say, gave the greatest pleasure to us both.

Having now finished my most important work in Brussels I made arrangements to have a few private sittings. The first of these was for Madame la Marquise Imperiali with her family. She had a beautiful house on the Avenue des Arts, and I spent a very busy day photographing them all. I asked her at lunch if she found her house much altered by the war, and to where they had escaped. It was with a proud look that she replied :

" Our King and Queen remained in Belgium, and so did we."

This same remark was made without exception at all the great houses which it was my privilege to visit. Through the Marquise I had an introduction to his Excellency Pierre de Margerie, the French Ambassador at Brussels. He was a most fascinating person and, after admiring the portraits of the King and Queen, said that he would like me to

take a portrait of his President, Monsieur Deschanel. But of that anon.

I also took a family group at the Duchess d'Ursel's, whose magnificent palace made a great impression upon me, and at Madame Josse Allard's, who had a fine house in the Rue Guimard. As I have previously said, everybody was wonderfully kind to me, and Madame Allard was no exception. One day she asked me to her house to meet His Excellency the Marquis de Villalobar, the Spanish Ambassador. I had heard and read so much of this great personality, and of what he did for Belgium during the war, that I was delighted at the opportunity of meeting him. Unfortunately, the sitting he promised me did not materialize, as he was suddenly summoned to Madrid.

The following autograph letter illustrates, among his other qualities, that fine courtesy which His Excellency invariably showed towards others:

26, Rue Montoyer, Bruxelles
July 24th, 1923

Dear Mr. Speaight,

On my return to Brussels after a short stay in Madrid I find your kind letter of May 29th and the photos you are so good as to send me of their Majesties the King and the Queen of Spain, my beloved Sovereigns, taken during their visit to Brussels.

I beg to thank you very sincerely for such excellent photos, which I appreciate indeed very much.

With best regards believe me to be,

Very truly yours,

Villalobar

That he who showed similar generous consideration on many occasions to me was fully capable of exacting it from others when necessary, may be gathered from the story—I believe authentic—of his encounter, during the Occupation, with a German officer who began shouting at him in German, whereupon His Excellency said very quietly in French, " Excuse me, sir. I cannot understand you. Speak slowly, politely, and in French."

Next day, although the Comtesse de Merode Westerloo lived some one hundred and fifty kilometres from Brussels, at the Château de Westerloo in Brabant, she sent her car for me to go there. At luncheon, I shall never forget the tragic figure of a young girl seated beside a Sister of Mercy. The girl had a frightened expression and looked very ill. I afterwards learned from the Countess that, though they were in residence, their house was used by a number of German officers, who grew very angry when they could not find any of the treasures belonging to the house. They threatened this unfortunate girl with a pistol to make her reveal the secret of the hiding-place. She did not know, but the constant worry and bullying by these men had made her very ill, and the presence of the Sister of Mercy was still necessary.

I also had a sitting from the Princess Eugène de Ligne, at her beautiful house in the Rue Montoyer. I was much struck with the magnificence of these Belgian houses. They were literally small palaces. Every one seemed very grateful for the picture I had produced of the King and Queen, and really it

seemed impossible for them to do enough, either in recommending me to their friends or showering their hospitality on my wife and myself. So successful was our visit, and so pressing were their invitations for us to return, that we decided to do so as early as possible.

Meantime the French Ambassador did not forget his promise, and soon after I returned from Brussels on April 20, 1920, a letter arrived from Paris informing me that M. le Président would be pleased to give me a sitting for his photograph. Armed with this letter, I had no difficulty in obtaining from the French Ambassador in London a letter to the Customs officers, and once again I set off for a foreign sitting, this time not for Royalty, but for my first experience of a President of a Republic.

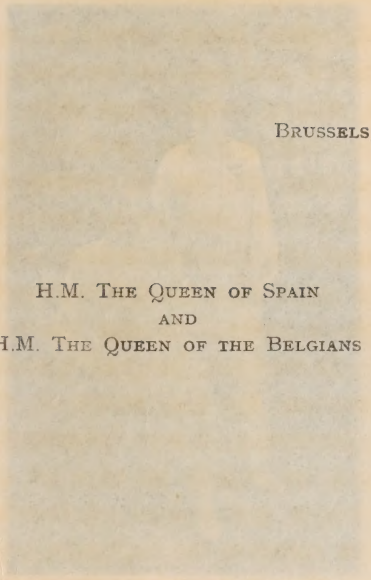
When I arrived at the Gare du Nord I found the Customs officials very exacting, and in spite of my letter from the Embassy they insisted on a luxury tax of something like twenty pounds. Feeling most indignant about this, and particularly as my stay was to be only for three days, I refused to pay. In the best French I could muster I tried to explain that I was there by the special request of their President; but they only smiled. So annoyed was I at the treatment that I told them to keep all my luggage and added that I would report their behaviour; but again they only smiled. The next morning I called at the Elysée to learn when it would be convenient for the President to favour me with the arranged sitting. The gentleman whom I saw looked at me with bland astonishment and said,

"Surely, Mr. Speaight, you have received our telegram." I replied that I had not, so he tried to explain to me that a sitting was impossible. I naturally asked why. "Surely," he said, "you have heard of the accident to the President?" Again I replied in the negative, and was then told that on the preceding day the President had fallen out of a railway carriage, and though not seriously hurt he would be unable to attend to any business for some time to come. It was not long afterwards that the world was shocked by the news of the President's tragic end. However, I was determined not to pay the luxury tax, especially in view of my disappointment, and after a great deal of trouble they allowed my agent to remove the luggage.

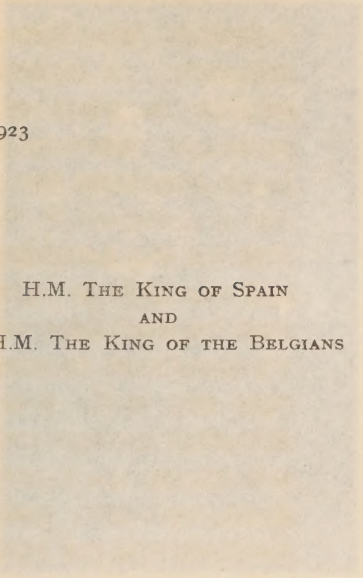
Next year I received the intimation that Her Majesty the Queen of the Belgians would like me to take some more pictures of her and the Princess Marie-José. Naturally I was only too delighted at this opportunity to revisit Belgium. As soon as it was known that I was returning, letters from people asking for appointments became so numerous that I realized that, with the limited time at my disposal, it would be quite impossible for me to take these pictures at the various private residences. In consequence, I arranged to have a studio at the Hôtel Astoria.

Again I set out to make a fresh studio. This time, realizing that it was not for one sitting only, I took correspondingly more care. We really set to business. One thing it taught me was a proper appreciation of the services of others. The head of a large

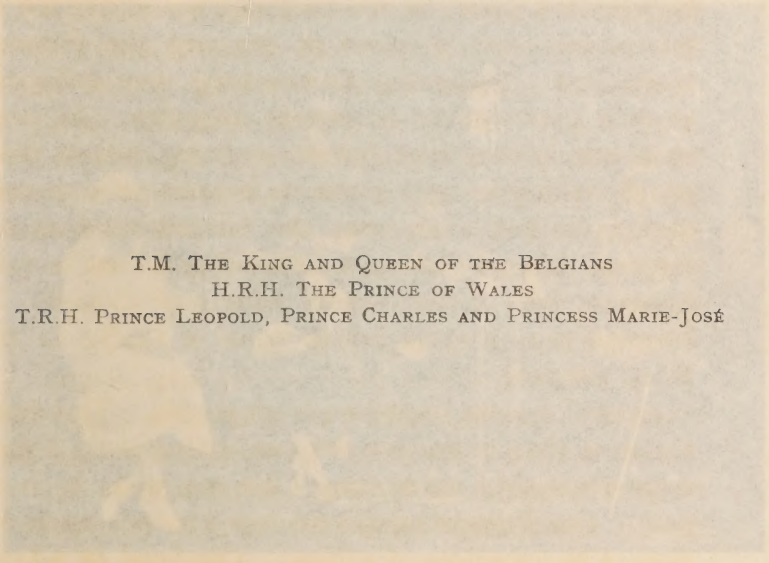
BRUSSELS, 1923



H.M. THE QUEEN OF SPAIN
AND
H.M. THE QUEEN OF THE BELGIANS



H.M. THE KING OF SPAIN
AND
H.M. THE KING OF THE BELGIANS



T.M. THE KING AND QUEEN OF THE BELGIANS
H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES
T.R.H. PRINCE LEOPOLD, PRINCE CHARLES AND PRINCESS MARIE-JOSÉ

To face page 204

"Surely, Mr. Speight, you have received our telegram!" I replied that I had not, so he tried to explain to me that a motor was impossible. I naturally asked why. "Why," he said, "you have news of the accident to the President?" Again I replied in the negative, and was then told that on the preceding day the President had fallen [illegible] and was unable to attend to any business for some time to come. It was not long afterwards that the world was shocked by the news of the President's tragic end. However, I was determined not to pay the luxury tax, especially in view of my disappointment, and after a great deal of trouble they allowed my agent to remove the luggage.

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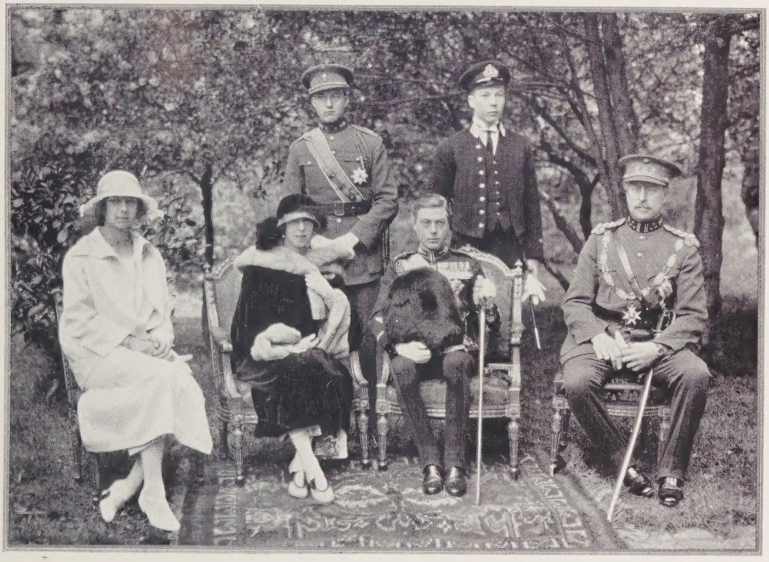
Again I set out to make a fresh studio. This time, realizing that it was not for one sitting only, I took correspondingly more care. We really are to blame for our carelessness. One thing it taught me was a proper appreciation of the services of others. The head of a large



firm, with people at his beck and call to do a hundred and one jobs, does not always realize how much he depends on others for the success of his work. When he is working single-handed, with the exception of his wife, and having all the donkey work to do—seeing to letters and making appointments—he certainly learns to be considerate of others. I must say, though, that the manager of the hotel gave me a great deal of assistance, especially with regard to the telephone, for if there is one thing more than another that taxes one's vocabulary in a foreign land it is the telephone. He arranged all my appointments for me, and the page-boys, of which there seemed to be an unlimited number, got into the way of announcing my sitters as well as Knight-Smith in London, if a trifle more shrilly. I shall never forget the dear old concièrge. He was one of those fine old veterans who had been in Brussels right through the Occupation, and there was always a pleasant smile on his face on my return, if he had booked an appointment for me in my absence!

Though my studio was but a temporary one, it was, nevertheless, really very complete, with two dressing-rooms in addition to the *salon* in which the pictures were taken. We were, too, in excellent company. At one time the suite on my left was occupied by Lord Northcliffe and that on my right by an Indian prince. They were busy days. I do not wish to appear conceited, but the craze had taken on in Brussels, as it did once before in Madrid, and we had as many appointments as we could manage. Had it not been for the pressing demands

for our return to England I think we could have stayed on indefinitely. Actually it was fortunate that I closed the studio when I did. I had fixed my prices with the franc at forty to the pound, and in honour bound I could not have put them up when, a day or two later, the franc slumped heavily. It was during this stay in Brussels that I first met Sir George Graham, our Ambassador, who afterwards proved of such great help to me.

In 1922 we again visited Brussels—this time on the occasion of the State visit of their Majesties the King and Queen of England, during which it had been arranged that I should take an official group. It is difficult to convey in a few words the excitement everywhere in Brussels pending this visit. On the day of the arrival of their Majesties I had had seats offered me at several windows along the route, and could also have gone to the Palace, but somehow or other, realizing that it was a British day, I felt I wanted to be with the British colony, who had had a large space reserved for them on the actual pavement of the Rue Royale. We all had miniature Union Jacks, and the reception given everywhere to the King and Queen was extraordinarily enthusiastic. We could hear the cheers long before the procession came in sight, intermingling with "*Vive le Roi!*" as they approached the British colony. But there was no "*Vive le Roi!*" from us. It was one loud English "Hurrah!" which they seemed to like better than all the other enthusiasm put together. And how fresh they looked! On this occasion more than on any other one could

not help noticing it. It really is extraordinary how their Majesties always succeed in looking as if they had come straight out of a bandbox whenever they make a public appearance. It does not seem to matter how far they have been travelling, or how fatigued they must really be—they present a picture of serene dignity which is quite unattainable by anyone else. On this occasion they had come straight from the train. Even if you are travelling in a Royal train, the journey from London to Brussels is not exactly refreshing, and most people prefer to go to bed immediately on arrival. They know well enough they are looking travel-worn. That dreadful liquid soap on the continental trains and the miserable trickle of water never seem to do anyone any good. Yet the Queen especially, wearing her favourite pastel shade with hat to match, looked absolutely unruffled, far more so indeed than Lord Haig and Lord Beatty, who were in attendance. Others of the party included the King and Queen of the Belgians and the Earl and Countess of Athlone.

For the few days that they were in Brussels everybody seemed to go mad. Belgium had hoped that their Majesties would have been able to pay their State visit long before 1922. After all, the war was over in 1918. There had been some comment about this, and various reasons were put forward for the three years' delay, but whatever the cause, when they did come their popularity knew no bounds.

In spite of the very busy time our Ambassador had during their visit, he was able to give me several interviews. On one occasion I told him that the

various British deputations were all anxious for me to photograph them before being received by our King and Queen, and that I was at a loss to know where to arrange my temporary studio. He replied, " This is a British week, Mr. Speaight ; what more fitting place than the Embassy ? " and he very kindly put at my disposal the courtyard of the Embassy in which to arrange these groups. Not only was it admirably suited for the purpose, but it gave great pleasure to the various bodies to be photographed with the British Embassy as their background.

Meanwhile the Queen of the Belgians had arranged for me to take a group at Laeken at a garden party she she was giving. I did not realize at the time how exceptionally fortunate I was. Actually it was the only unofficial ceremony that took place, being arranged more to give their Majesties a rest than for anything else. It was purely a private function at which there were not more than fifty guests, and I shall always remember my arrival at the gates. It was one of the few occasions on which the Press were barred and there was a great crowd of people watching the guests arrive. My own car was hung up, and for the only time in my life I was able to realize the embarrassment caused by photographers. They were on the tops of the cars and clinging to the railings—anywhere and everywhere—photographing each single guest who arrived, including myself. It was an odd experience—after years of telling other people to pose for me, to find the rôles reversed ; but I enjoyed it enormously. As

soon as I was inside the gates, however, I became the photographer once again.

I had already arranged a suitable spot in one of the annexes of the huge conservatory where the guests were to have tea, and quickly I took up my position. Though I was able to see the King and Queen arrive, I was sufficiently away from the line of route to be inconspicuous. So you can readily imagine my surprise when, with the Royal party barely arrived, the Queen of the Belgians came forward with outstretched hand to greet me and to ask if there was anything I wanted.

It was, as I say, an informal gathering. All the ceremony had disappeared and it was more like an English country house-party than a State function. After having taken tea they came out, the two Queens leading the way. I had hopes of photographing them alone together, and was just about to do this when King Albert arrived accompanied by King George. Both immediately took up their places. No sooner had I taken the group of four than King Albert came forward and said that he would like me to take another group, including Lord Beatty and Lord Haig, and also Princess Alice and Lord Athlone.

But why will people always appear in a hurry? More than once one or other of the party remarked, "You must be quick, Mr. Speaight." And yet I doubt if the whole group took more than a couple of minutes to photograph. In all groups of this sort there is always one cry, "Do hurry up!" but as soon as it is over people stay and talk for an indefinite period. Photographers all over the world will agree

with me sadly in this. It is an odd streak in human nature. But there is this to be said for photographing Royalty: they never giggle suddenly or want to change their position just as the plate is being exposed. Nor do Royalty ever try to teach the photographer his business. So often suggestions are made by ordinary sitters which, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, are both useless and annoying. The only occasion I have ever heard of any such suggestion being made by Royalty was in Scotland when a friend of mine was taking a group including the late Queen Alexandra and King George. He had just got them nicely into position and was about to take the photograph when Queen Alexandra turned to King George and said, "I do not believe the light will be good here." To which he replied briefly, "Well, that is his job."

Clearly these reminiscences would not ring true if they did not recall the failures and disappointments as well as the successes. One of the most agonizing moments I have ever experienced was when awaiting the development of the films of the Royal group containing the King and Queen. It has always been my custom when, after their sitting, people have said they were sure the pictures were going to be a great success to reply, "I hope so, madam, but you never can tell." Photographs have to go through so many processes, and a single mistake is likely to spoil the result. In the case of the Royal group I had miscalculated the light. I realized afterwards how this occurred. Brilliant sunshine lit up the whole place, in spite of the green wash which had

been sprayed on the roof of the conservatory to soften the light and keep it cool. This green wash must have had much greater actinic properties than I had anticipated, and the result was that the pictures were very much under-exposed and lacked all detail in the shadows. It is difficult to express what my thoughts were. Every consideration had been shown me, and Queen Elisabeth was relying on me to produce a faithful souvenir of the occasion. They were usable, it is true; indeed, I do not think anyone except an expert would realize how technically bad they were, but that did not comfort me at all. However, in photography, as in almost everything else, nothing teaches one like experience, and I do not think I shall ever again be caught napping by a green wash on a glass roof.

Immediately following the visit of our King and Queen to Belgium the Grand Duke and Duchess of Luxemburg paid a State visit. The riotous rejoicing at the time of our King and Queen's visit rather took the glamour out of this second State visit. On this occasion I was not photographing for the Queen of the Belgians, but for the Comte d'Ansembourg of the Luxemburg Legation, who later sent my wife and myself seats for the Royal gala performance at the opera. This was my first experience of being present at such a function. The beautiful floral decorations, and the gorgeous uniforms of practically every one in the Opera House, were most impressive. Our seats happened to be just below the Royal box, and when the Royal party entered the National Anthems were played. I could not

help feeling how lost the Grand Duchess looked. She seemed to be scanning the audience for faces she knew, when all at once she saw my wife and myself, and with a beaming smile gave us a pleasant nod of recognition. The Grand Duchess was quite young and conveyed the impression of feeling very lonely among so many strangers.

April, May, and June of 1923 will always be remembered by me as being very busy, interesting months, since I spent much of that time in Belgium in connexion with the various State visits. In April the Prince of Wales visited that country to unveil the British War Memorial, and the Queen of the Belgians had arranged for me to photograph the group, with the Prince of Wales, in the garden of the Palace at Brussels. I heard from her secretary that the Queen wished one Belgian photographer to be in attendance as well.

I fully appreciated the advisability of a Belgian photographer being represented, and was very pleased that the choice had fallen on Monsieur Lonthie. I had met him before and knew that we should work easily together. Fortunately, the grouping was to be done early in the morning. As bitter experience had shown me, when an official group is taken later in the day between two ceremonies, not only are the guests tired, but one is invariably rushed. My delight was short lived, however, for although it was before ten o'clock and the Royal party approached in a most leisurely manner from the house to the position in the grounds which had been chosen for the group, I was never

more rushed in my life. No sooner had they arrived than the Queen approached and said, " Mr. Speaight, I am very sorry. We are rather late and there is not a moment to spare." Indeed, there was only time for one group, in which, however, the Prince of Wales' full dress uniform of the Grenadier Guards contrasted vividly with the simple uniforms of King Albert and Prince Leopold. After this was taken I suggested to the Queen that it would be nice to get a group of Prince Leopold and the Prince of Wales together. She quite fell in with the idea, but said it was impossible at the moment, although I might be able to arrange with Prince Leopold to do it later in the day. On telling the Prince what the Queen had said, he replied, " Well, I cannot promise, but if you can arrange to be here at lunch-time I will see what can be done."

About one o'clock an equerry came out and told me that the two Princes would be with me in a quarter of an hour. By this time the Prince of Wales had changed into khaki, and the two Heirs Apparent, accompanied by Prince Charles, came out chatting happily together. No sooner, however, had they taken up their positions than all the animation seemed to vanish from the Prince of Wales' face. I did not wonder at it. Few of the general public realize that on these State visits every minute of the time is mapped out. I believe that on this particular day the Prince had changed his costume five times. On looking through the Royal programme I was amazed to find what he had already been through that day, although it was

only one o'clock. There were three engagements in the afternoon, a State banquet in the evening, and a great fancy dress ball at, I believe, the French Embassy. Yet, when at last they retired in the early hours of the morning, I was told that of all those in attendance who had been through the day's ordeal the Prince of Wales showed the least signs of fatigue.

But to get back to the photographs. As I say, all animation had left the Prince's face. Something had to be done quickly or the photograph would be a failure, so I turned to my assistant, a young friend of mine who had kindly volunteered to help me on this occasion. He was the manager of Kodak's for Belgium, and, far more important at the moment, had been at Oxford at the same time as the Prince of Wales. I turned to him in despair and asked him if he could think of any way to make the Prince smile. "Leave it to me," he replied. "I think I can manage it." Up he walked to the Prince of Wales and said, "Your Royal Highness probably does not remember when you were a full private under my orders for a day?" The Prince looked surprised for a second, and then a flash of recognition came over his face.

"Oh, you mean the good old days at Aldershot? Of course I remember those manœuvres." Out went the Prince's hand for a hearty shake of recognition. All ceremony of State was thrown off and the Prince chatted in the most natural way, with the result that I was able to get one of the most charming pictures I have ever taken of him.

On the morning of the Prince's departure I hap-

pened to be at the house of the Comte de Grünn, when who should come in but Baron Moncheur the Belgian Ambassador in London, who had just been to see the Prince off at the station. There was a look of great relief on his face and he said openly, not exactly how pleased they were to see the back of the Prince, but how grateful he was that the visit had been so successful and had gone right through without a hitch. It made one realize how great was the responsibility of those who have the arranging of these Royal visits.

On May the first I returned to Brussels and on the following morning had an interview with the Queen's private secretary, Baron de Traux de Wardin. Though I had had a good deal of correspondence with the Baron this was the first time I had met him. He received me most cordially and gave me a personal introduction to the Comtesse Liederkerke. I had met the Countess at my studio in London and also at my temporary studio at the Astoria the year before. She was attached to the Queen of Spain during her visit to Brussels and was leaving that afternoon to meet Her Majesty somewhere *en route*.

This personal introduction was most fortunate, as it gave me an opportunity of letting the King and Queen of Spain know that I had been commanded to take the official photographs during their visit. I then called on Monsieur Lonthie, who, I was pleased to hear, had again been chosen to work with me. The group was arranged to be taken on the following day at 12.30. I felt a little doubtful

whether we should get this group then or not, because I had looked at the official programme and did not see how it could possibly be arranged. Anyhow, there was nothing to be done except to get the apparatus fixed up and await events. "All the world's a stage." Never does this quotation apply more truly than during an official visit of Royalty. You must bear in mind that, to get the perfect order and quiet dignity which one sees when they are passing through the streets, a considerable amount of preparation has been required. On this occasion, and on others, I had an opportunity of seeing several of the processions being formed up, and the informal talking and chaffing of the Royal party just before it set out reminded me vividly of the scene in a theatre just before the curtain goes up. It is always the same: no sooner does the procession come in sight of the public than the mask is put on. The ceremonial smiles and salutations are given, and it is impossible not to imagine Royalty to be a race apart. Yet, after all, Royalty are only human, in fact, often more human than their subjects.

As I anticipated, it was not possible for the group to be taken that day. On State visits one single ceremony need be only a few minutes late to make all one's plans fall to the ground. It was, however, very fortunate for me, because had they been taken I should not have had the time allotted which I was able to secure on the following day. It was a very hot day, and having nothing to do during the morning I thought I would arrive at the Palace early and enjoy the beauty of the grounds. Though

they are in the heart of Brussels the grounds of the Palace are wonderfully laid out with many cool and shady spots. I was sitting down quietly meditating in one of the side-walks when to my astonishment I saw the King of the Belgians and an equerry approaching. They were in serious conversation. It made me realize that even during these official visits of a foreign Royalty the King has still his matters of State to attend to. Seeing them approach I stepped back, hoping they would not notice me.

But the King's quick eye noticed and recognized me at once. He broke off his conversation with his equerry and turning to me shook hands and spent several minutes in conversation about the photographs which I was going to take that day. He then rejoined his equerry. People may think this is too petty an incident to be worth chronicling, yet it is this wonderful graciousness of the King and Queen of the Belgians that endears them to every one, and is one of the securest pillars upon which their sovereignty is maintained.

I was not to be disappointed about photographing this time, and of all the official groups I have ever taken this was the least hurried. As usual, the two Queens came first. It was windy at the time and both of them, with their hands over their hair, exclaimed simultaneously that the wind was blowing their hair to pieces. The Queen of Spain then came forward and with her charming smile recalled my visit to her at Madrid.

What memories Kings and Queens have! The Queen of Spain reminded me of a little incident

which occurred during my visit to Spain fourteen years before, and which, had I not kept a diary, even I might not have remembered.

The grouping was most informal on this occasion. The Queens were taken together and the Kings together. In the latter group King Alfonso put his arm through King Albert's. They were both smoking, and anything less like an official State photograph it would be difficult to imagine. After I had taken this group King Alfonso turned to me and said, "What about the Princes?" I said, "I have asked them Your Majesty, but they do not appear to want to be photographed." "Oh! We will see about that," he said with a merry laugh. And off he went at a sharp run. The young Princes, realizing that he was after them, ran also. He soon overtook them, however, and brought them back as a couple of captives, all three out of breath. Everybody laughed at the incident.

After the picture was taken Prince Leopold congratulated me, as the Queen had previously done, on the success of the pictures taken during the Prince of Wales' visit. I asked Prince Leopold if he would autograph one for me. He readily assented and said that if I would come back at four o'clock he would give it to me. So again at four o'clock in the afternoon I returned to the Palace. This time it was impossible to gain admittance, owing to the crowds waiting to see the Royal party return from the Hôtel de Ville. But I had been too long in Brussels not to know my way about, and remembering a small gate at the back of the Palace I hurriedly

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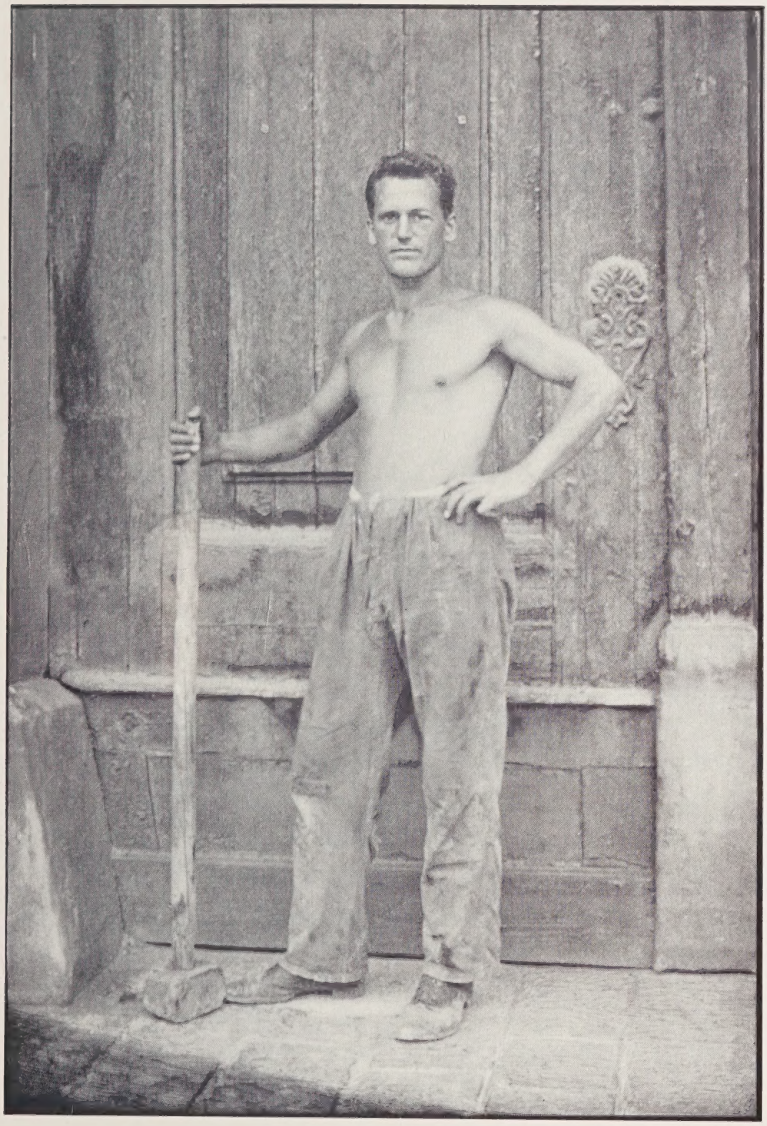


went round there. On handing in my card I was informed that it would be quite impossible for anyone to see the Prince that afternoon. But, remembering what he had said, that I was to be there at four, I waited, and almost to the moment the Prince came out and handed me the portrait signed by him, adding that Prince Charles had also signed it. It was a group of three with the Prince of Wales in the centre. On my return to London I sent this to Admiral Halsey, and the Prince of Wales graciously autographed it as well. I look upon this group, autographed by two future kings, as one of the most interesting in my collection of autograph portraits. I had told Prince Leopold that I intended to send it to the Prince of Wales, and I found out afterwards that several other photographs were autographed in the same way for members of their suite.

Before closing this chapter there is one incident I should like to recall. Monsieur Lonthie, the Belgian photographer, had been photographing with me, and after the pictures had been taken he said how much he would like me to be present while he developed his films. I looked upon this as a great compliment. There has been only one other occasion in the whole of my life on which I have known one photographer ask another to watch him developing his Royal pictures. I naturally accepted, and together we spent the best part of the afternoon developing his films. They had turned out very successfully, and those which he had duplicated were equally good. He was certainly a charming fellow, actually going so far as to suggest that I

should take the duplicates back to London with me in case any accident occurred to mine.

The other occasion on which I have been present with a brother-photographer when Royal plates were being developed was on one Court night. I heard that my neighbour, the late Mr. James Lauder, head of Lafayette's in Bond Street, had just photographed Queen Mary in her Court dress. Mr. Lauder was a man I had always admired. He was one of the old school of sound, technical photographers, and during the interval before and after the Court, I went to his studio to congratulate him on being honoured by a sitting from the Queen. The old man was so pleased at my calling on him that he said, " I am now going in to watch the developing. Do come in with me." I entered the dark room and found that the man who was developing was an old apprentice whom I had trained.

The following year, when he was commanded to photograph King George on a Court night, Mr. Lauder again asked me if I would care to come and watch the plates developed. It is these little acts of good comradeship between one man and another that make the wheels of life run smoothly, however great the struggle for survival.

Again in June I returned to Brussels. This time it was for the handsome King of Norway. I was determined on this occasion to try to prevent the similarity that is bound to occur when official photographs are taken in the same surroundings. So instead of choosing a garden background I arranged to take the group just inside the courtyard

with some massive stone columns for a background. As I afterwards discovered, we could be seen there from the Queen's apartments, and no sooner had I got everything fitted up than a message came down to say that the Comtesse Ghislaine de Caraman Chimay wished to see me. I was ushered up into a big *salon*, full of officers, ambassadors, and diplomats in gorgeous uniforms, leisurely smoking their after-luncheon cigarettes and waiting for the entrance of the Royal suite. The scene was absurdly like a stage setting, and a short time ago it was vividly recalled to me by the scene in Sabatini's play " The Tyrant " where the court awaits the entry of Cæsar Borgia.

The Comtesse de Caraman Chimay soon appeared and informed me that the Queen had been so pleased with the arrangements for the previous groups that she wished me to have the same again. I gave the Countess the reasons for the alterations; I also pointed out that the wind was even higher than it was last time, and that the new position was sheltered. So she laughingly shrugged her shoulders and said, " It is the Queen's wish."

There was no alternative. So back I went and fixed up my apparatus all over again with the background as previously used. By the time the King and Queen appeared, accompanied by their Royal guest, who made a striking figure in his naval uniform, the wind was blowing very gustily, and putting her hands on her forehead as before to prevent her hair from being blown about, Queen Elisabeth laughingly said, " You were right."

CHAPTER XIV

EAST, WEST, AND THE SPIRIT WORLD

A studio in a cloak-room—A lightning change—An unofficial picture—The Crown Prince of Japan—The flowery language of the East.—From the known to the unknown—Experience at a séance—Precautions against imposture—Spirits show preference for a certain camera—Unexpected results—An open mind.

IN order to fit in with the convenience of Royal sitters I have had to set my temporary studio not only in drawing-rooms and reception halls, but in all sorts of queer places—once, for instance, in a servants' corridor and once in a barn. On one notable occasion I utilized a cloak-room in St. James's Palace. It was when the Prince of Wales gave a banquet in honour of the Crown Prince of Japan in 1921.

As the photographs had to be taken at night, a great deal of preparation was necessary, and it was very important to select a suitable room, especially as a number of guests were expected. I chose the cloak-room at the top of the Grand Staircase, because it would enable my work to be done before the reception, thus avoiding the possible disturbance of onlookers, whose presence might embarrass the distinguished sitters. The room had the further advantage of facilitating the laying of an electric cable, the fixing of special lights, and the making of other necessary arrangements. The photographs

being taken by request of the Prince of Wales, I was given *carte blanche*, and succeeded in converting the cloak-room into a completely equipped studio.

When showing the arrangements I had made to Admiral Sir Lionel Halsey, an elderly equerry bustled up and brusquely demanded, "On whose authority has this room been turned upside down, I should like to know?" Admiral Halsey turned to him and said quietly, "This is the Prince's affair." Nothing more was said.

The banquet was due to begin in about half an hour, so I inquired a little anxiously when the Prince would be ready. "You hear that car?" the Admiral replied. "That is the Prince returning from squash racquets." "Goodness!" I could not help exclaiming. "His Royal Highness is bound to be late." But the Admiral smiled and said nothing. To my surprise, in less than twenty minutes I saw the Prince approaching through the long suite of reception rooms—in evening dress, perfectly groomed, and absolutely unruffled. He strolled along unhurriedly, smoking a cigarette and glancing from side to side to see that everything was in order for the reception. On seeing me he stretched out his hand and said smilingly, "When did we last meet?" "I don't recollect the last time, Your Royal Highness," I replied, "but the occasion I remember best was that evening in September, 1914" (that was on the eve of his departure for France). "Yes," he said reflectively, "I remember that night very well. A great deal has happened since then."

While waiting for the Crown Prince of Japan the

Prince, Admiral Halsey, and General Trotter stood talking together near me. Suddenly the Prince turned round with a laugh. " Here we are," he said, " all dressed up and nowhere to go. Let's be photographed while we are waiting. But the worst of it is that we'll look just like a music-hall turn ! " I may here mention that both Admiral Halsey and General Trotter were wearing rows of decorations and orders.

I arranged my camera and photographed them in a group. " Remember this is not to be published," the Prince called out ; but when the proofs were submitted later he agreed to their publication, as the expressions were so good.

Just as I had finished taking the group, the Crown Prince arrived. In appearance he was shorter and thicker set than the Prince of Wales, and European dress clothes did not fit him with the same ease. He wore a ribbon across his breast and two other decorations, but no miniature medals. Instead he had an enormous white carnation high up in his buttonhole, like a shoulder spray. He knew practically no English, and stood there smiling benignly, but a little uncomfortably, until the Prince stepped forward and addressed him in fluent French. After the group had been photographed I wished to obtain the permission of the Crown Prince to photograph him alone. With this objective in mind I had taken the precaution of asking Charles Pollard Crowther—now a well-known " wireless uncle " whose tales of Japan have been broadcast so often—to come with me that evening. Having lived in Japan for thirty years

Mr. Crowther has an expert knowledge of the language and customs of that country. He approached the Crown Prince and explained, no doubt in appropriately flowery phrases, the privilege I sought. The Crown Prince's face immediately lit up, and after a few minutes' animated conversation graciously gave his consent.

" What on earth is your friend saying ? " the Prince of Wales asked me. " I haven't seen the Crown Prince look so pleased or so much at ease since he arrived." " I don't know, Your Royal Highness," I said. " I only asked him to inquire whether the Crown Prince would honour me with a sitting for a single portrait." Then turning to Mr. Crowther I asked him whatever he had been saying at such length to the Crown Prince. He answered me that he had simply been rendering my request into the correct Japanese phraseology, which was to the effect that we, his Royal Highness' humble and abject servants, grovelled in the dust before him and craved permission to photograph his august countenance. " Good Heavens ! " said the Prince. " Am I expected to talk like that ? "

My very next sitter was a ghost. The following day Mr. James Douglas, editor of the *Sunday Express* called on me. He said he was much interested in spirit photography. What did I think of it ? I said that although I had read a certain amount about it the matter had not particularly interested me, and, as I had not had any practical experience, I was not in a position to form an opinion. " Well," he said, " you are just the man I am looking for—someone

who is an expert photographer and can approach the matter from an unbiassed standpoint. If I arrange for a séance for experiment under certain conditions to which you agree, are you willing to attend ? " As it is always interesting to inquire into, and, if possible, fathom mysteries, the idea rather appealed to me, and as I was to be allowed to do things my own way I consented. I was to bring my own camera, plates, chemicals and other requisites for performing the whole of the photographic operations. Accordingly, an arrangement was made for a séance at the British College of Psychical Science, 59 Holland Park, and at the appointed time I attended there. I brought the apparatus I was accustomed to use at home, but bought the plates at a chemist's on the way, and they were, of course, in the manufacturers' original sealed package.

The experiments were made in an ordinary room in no particular way arranged for photography, except that a rather dark grey background was suspended at a convenient place against a wall. It was just a painted linen sheet of the kind usually employed in photography. Those present during the experiments were Mr. Douglas, a Member of Parliament whose name I cannot remember, Mr. Hope—a member of the Crewe Circle and one of the most successful of spirit photographers—his medium, a lady, and myself. I understand that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Lady Gray were expected, but owing to other engagements they were unable to come.

During the experiments the compact made with

me, that the whole of the operations should be performed by me, was not broken except with my consent, and my conditions were accepted without discussion. For the first exposure, however, I was asked to use their own small camera, with which, I was told, some of the best spirit photographs had been obtained. The reason I was given was that the spirits were used to that camera. I agreed to this as it would give me the opportunity of seeing if, in any way, the procedure of a photographer noted for his success in obtaining extras—the term used in spiritualiastic circles—on plates exposed by him differed from my own. Their camera was that included in a cheap set of photographic apparatus, very popular at the time it was made, known as "Lancaster's 1896 Instantograph." I carefully examined the camera, dark slide, and lens, and was fully convinced that they were in precisely the same state as when issued by the maker.

I opened the package of plates in the dark room, and having placed one in the dark slide repacked the remainder and put the package in my pocket. No one, while I was in the house, touched any of the plates before or after exposure but myself. On returning to the room Mr. Douglas was posed as the material subject before the background. I adjusted the camera, placed in the dark slide, and drew the shutter of the slide. I then covered the camera with the focusing cloth. Some time was spent in invoking the spirits—hand-clasping, singing hymns, and so on. Mr. Hope actually made the exposure, I took the dark slide from the camera, and returning to the dark

room, put the plate into the developing dish and poured on the developer. The plate proved to be correctly exposed. But in the course of development, in addition to the image of the material sitter, I found, to my surprise, three patches of light action appearing on the background over the sitter's head. It was not until the plate had been cleared through the process of fixing that any detail was apparent in these patches, but, on examination in the daylight, in the centre of each patch there was a faint but distinct image of a face: the same face repeated. Then I made some attempts with my own apparatus, performing the whole of the operations, including the actual exposures myself, but obtained no sign of extras on my plates.

This is the simple story of my only excursion into spirit photography. The one fact established was that a certain phenomenon occurred, as I was told it was likely to, in using a particular camera, but under circumstances that did not admit, in my critical judgment, of imposture, whereas no similar phenomenon occurred when using my own camera. This does not prove anything either way, and I still have an open mind. I have examined very many spirit photographs from time to time, but the more I see the more mystified I become. This was not an important episode, but it was an interesting experience, and must necessarily be recorded in a faithful account of my career.

CHAPTER XV

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PHOTOGRAPH

The amateur and the professional—The discovery of Daguerre —A slow process—An enterprising professional—The printing-out paper process—The artist and the photographer—A happy combination — The carte-de-visite — Conventional Victorian pictures—The cult of the stile and the verandah—Demand creates supply—The semi-professional—Prices cut—Experience must be paid for—Photography protected in Vienna—A willing model—Co-operation.

WHEN I started writing my reminiscences as a Court photographer it was my intention not to deal with the technical side of photography at all, but to confine my remarks to personal experiences with my sitters. As the book draws to a close, however, I cannot help feeling that it would not be complete without some reference to photography as a whole and also to the influence which the amateur has on the professional. Photography is one of the few professions where the amateur has sometimes had a better knowledge than the professional of the scientific side ; but when talking to clients who have been keen amateur photographers, I have often been amazed by their knowledge of lenses, colour processes, and the various makes of plates and papers, though of course, I am not referring to the sort of amateur who has purchased a Kodak and taken the advertisement literally, " You press the button and we do the rest."

It was an amateur who made photography safe for the world, the earliest practical process of photography being that of Daguerre, of Paris, who announced his discovery in 1839. The French Government, in a way unusual with governments, recognized its importance and induced him to give it freely to the world in consideration of a pension for life. The photograph was made on a silvered copper plate, and specimens are no doubt familiar to most of my readers—portraits of their ancestors, or perhaps of themselves as children, made between 1842 and 1860. One of the great disadvantages of this process was the length of exposure. It was necessary to place sitters in direct sunlight and whiten the face; for not only were the materials very slow, but high-speed lenses were unknown.

When one visits a modern cinema studio and sees the brilliant arc lights taking the place of sunshine, and faces whitened in order to facilitate the speed, one does not always realize that it is only another case of history repeating itself. Little did Daguerre dream in 1839 that eighty or so years afterwards faces would still be whitened and that exposures, instead of lasting many minutes, would be reduced to fractions of a second. England seems to have taken up the daguerreotype process more than most other countries except the United States of America. There are few inventions in which England has taken the lead from the start, and held it throughout, more conspicuously than in photography.

One of the pioneers of this process was J. E. Mayall, who had a studio in Regent Street and was among

the earliest to work this process professionally. He was also one of the last of the daguerreotypists ; but, almost to the year of his death, he was continually making improvements and adopting new processes. Mayall's business, which later developed into the most prominent naval and military business in this country, was purchased by my firm in 1914, and through this incorporation we can claim connexion with one of the oldest photographic businesses in London, if not the very oldest of all.

In the same year as Daguerre published his process, an Englishman, Henry Fox-Talbot of Lacock Abbey, Wilts, read a paper at the Royal Society on his method, which was to produce pictures on paper in place of the copper plate. Here again the fault of the process in the earliest stages was its extreme slowness. His specimens were prints of flowers, ferns, and leaves. He had, in fact, produced what we should now term " the printing out paper." By various experiments he increased the sensitiveness of the papers, and some of the most interesting and artistic productions at the Century Photographic Exhibition held at the Princes Gallery last year were done by his process. These were made about 1843 by one of the happiest combinations imaginable, being the work of the painter D. W. Hill, R.S.A., in conjunction with the photographer Adamson. It was an ideal combination, that of an artist and a photographer each performing that part of the work which fell within his particular province. It would be invidious to attempt to apportion the merit in their joint productions, the art of the one and the

science and skill of the other being so intimately combined. In fact, the portraits as photographs may quite properly be considered to rank with the portraits of Reynolds and Gainsborough as paintings.

Indeed, all the best of the very early photographers recognized that their proper course was to follow in the footsteps of painters who, whether they worked on a large canvas or on a small ivory, must necessarily have had artistic training to succeed. So they adopted the same traditions and, as far as the circumstances would permit, followed the same methods. There was no selling dozens of photographs in those early days. To have a portrait or a silhouette made had always been a serious and expensive matter, and so it was also considered a serious matter to go to the photographer. Probably most photographers performed the whole of the work themselves—at any rate, all except the purely mechanical parts. Photographers were few and, at the prices they charged, a few sitters were sufficient to make business pay ; which accounts for the small number of early photographic portraits.

In 1859 Disderi, photographer to the Court of Napoleon III, introduced the carte-de-visite, which presumably, was at first intended to be used as its name indicates (though I do not think this was ever done.) Within a year or two it became the rage here, the success being due to the fact that a dozen portraits of this type cost very little more than had previously been paid for a single copy. Portraits were spread almost broadcast. Albums were made to hold the prints and practically every home

possessed several of them. Moreover, as it was the fashion to fill them by exchanges one or more of the family had to be photographed to procure the exchange they wanted, and photographers flourished like the green bay tree. This, indeed, was the finest campaign ever launched for photographers from a business point of view, though falling under the thraldom of the album turned out to be the direst misfortune that could have happened to photography as an art.

The demand for the carte-de-visite portraits induced hundreds of people who had no training in photography and no appreciation of art to set up in business as professional photographers. There was no lack of customers, and one only has to turn over the pages of an old family album to recognize how stereotyped everything became.

From time to time it is true there were slight changes in the fashion of accessories employed, and after a time they became a little less obviously artificial. At first the pillar and curtains were the universal features, and then came the verandah with balustrade overlooking the distant landscape. This was considered quite a proper setting for a lady in evening dress seated on a drawing-room chair and viewing the scene through the back of her head. The rustic stile, probably made with cork bark, was also very popular, especially in provincial studios. The lady's hat was always much in evidence, and the gentleman never appeared without a topper in his hand.

Quickly a new trade sprang up—the manufacture

of photographic accessories. Almost every studio possessed a piece of furniture which by various processes of transformation might distantly be made to represent an escritoire or a sideboard, or, with a great deal of imagination, the side of a piano. And a velvet-covered chair, which could be fitted with backs of various kinds and heights, was also an essential part of its equipment. But none of these implements resembled any real article of furniture; their chief aim was to keep the sitter rigid. You must remember that to be photographed was still a slow process, and without exception every one had a head-rest fixed behind the head. "Give a dog a bad name and it sticks to him," can fittingly be applied to the photographer. I think the still surviving impression that going to the studio is as bad as going to the dentist is largely the legacy of that obsolete instrument known as the head-rest.

In recent years another tribulation has been meted out to photographers—the rise of the semi-professionals. They first appeared on the scene towards the close of the war, when every one wanted to be photographed and almost all the professionals were serving their country (though seldom of course in the photographic section!).

The trouble was that every one with a camera, then as now, could set up in business as a professional photographer, for there are no official qualifications, no examinations to pass, and no tests of efficiency. They descended like a plague of locusts on the land, and several have remained. They have little or no artistic knowledge, and moreover, some of them

undercut prices in a most drastic way, basing their charges merely on the cost of plates and paper.

Did one ever hear of a lawyer, doctor, chemist, or dentist calculating his prices on the cost of raw material? Of course not. They fully realize the many years of study they have put in before passing the necessary examinations to qualify them to practise on their own, and take this into consideration when arranging their fees. This idea of study ought also in a lesser degree to apply to the photographer. If many of the so-called professional photographers had to serve an apprenticeship they would at once realize when making out their charges that a good deal more had to be paid for than actual raw material, rent, rates, and taxes.

Whilst on this subject of apprenticeship I should like to relate a conversation with Herr Schieberth, the famous Viennese photographer, whom I met in Vienna during a visit to Austria last year to study photographic conditions there. Herr Schieberth told me that in Vienna there were eight hundred professional photographers to a population of two millions, while in London there were twelve hundred to a population of eight millions. He also mentioned that photography is a protected profession in Vienna, and that it is illegal for anyone who has not served an apprenticeship to set up as a photographer. This gives not only a legal standing but a dignity to the profession which it sadly lacks in some other cities.

In Vienna I found the standard of art, not only in photography but in everything else, higher than in any other country I had visited. The people

seem to love and appreciate art in all its branches. To give an instance of the workmen's attitude towards art I will relate a little experience I had while walking across the Josephplatz.

I noticed a number of workmen repairing the road, in a way which is very familiar to us here in London (too much so for me when Bond Street is up), and while watching them I was very much interested in one man in particular—a superb figure stripped to the waist. His fine carriage and clear, chiselled face appealed to me immensely, and I could not help thinking how much I should like to make a photographic study of him. Fortunately for me I had with me my son, who was at that time studying German in Vienna ; for as my own knowledge of the language is only sufficient to enable me to catch a train, find a bed, or order a meal, I think I might have had difficulty in making my request understood. My son went up to the head of the gang, explaining how much I would like to photograph the man, and permission was readily given for him to leave his work and do as I wished. Seeing on the other side of the square a delightful old oak door I beckoned to the man to follow, and in that open square took quite a number of serious studies of him. A crowd collected as in my early days when photographing in Trafalgar Square and showed the keenest interest in me and my sitter. When I had finished I offered him money. To my surprise he replied, " I would rather not take your money, but I would very much like a copy of the picture." (See facing page 218).

I do not wish to say anything against our British

workmen, but I cannot imagine any one of them taking this view of life. In Vienna art comes first. You have only to go into a café and watch the people listening to the music, whether it is from a few strolling players, or, in a more fashionable restaurant, from a uniformed band. You will notice how every one stops talking and a dead silence prevails during some special passage of music until the final burst of applause. No doubt other people have had an experience like the following, yet I cannot help quoting it by contrast. It occurred at Bournemouth some time ago, when a friend of mine took her husband to a classical concert at which a great *prima donna* was singing. After the song was over there was much applause. My friend's husband, who had been hopelessly bored throughout, seeing a woman in front of him vigorously applauding, tapped her on the shoulder and said in a tone of genuine horror, "My good woman, please stop. Otherwise she may come back and sing it all over again." I do not think such a scene as this could possibly be witnessed in Vienna. If so, I should be sorry for the reception of the man who attempted it.

I have already referred to the mad rush of untrained amateurs to the photographic profession which took place during the war. Like the great gold rushes of the last century it was temporary and unnatural, and when at the end of the war the trained professionals came back to their old occupation, a return to normal conditions was inevitable. The unskilled worker found himself no longer required, and with more experienced photographers

in the field some sort of co-operation became possible.

It was with the object of setting on foot some such co-operative scheme, and of obtaining first-hand knowledge of photographic conditions in the different parts of England, that in the winter of 1924-25 I made a tour of most of our principal towns. This tour was rendered possible by Messrs. Kodak, who generously placed their vast organization at the disposal of the Professional Photographers' Association. At the towns visited meetings of professional photographers were addressed by Mr. Thomas Bell, the able advertising manager of Kodak's, and myself. I was much impressed by the enthusiastic reception with which our plans for closer co-operation were received. As at the present day class distinction is rapidly disappearing, so is the distinction between the bigger and lesser photographers. During heart-to-heart talks with a few brother-photographers after the formal meeting was over, I would get a real insight into the working conditions of their particular town. There seemed little of that jealousy between rivals which had formerly been so apparent; all were willing to exchange ideas and to lend a helping hand to their fellow-photographers on every possible occasion.

Almost always our conversation veered round to that practice of giving complimentary sittings which is so dangerous both to the photographer and to the client. The photographer's own reputation can in no way be enhanced by it, since no client really appreciates anything which has been given to him for the sake of advertisement; and the reputation of

the people photographed is liable to be ruined, although they probably do not realize this. Few people would accept free sittings if they knew that by so doing they place the copyright of the picture entirely in the hands of the photographer, and that later they may see their likeness on a chocolate box cover or in an advertisement for some new brand of face-cream. In fact, there is no limit to the use to which an unscrupulous photographer may put their picture. As has been already explained in the first chapter of this book, I was myself guilty of this crime in my early days, but experience has taught me how unwise it is.

An amusing incident occured in October, 1924, when I was returning by the midnight train from a meeting at Darlington. A number of photographers were seeing me off, and the ever-energetic pressman was, as usual, on the spot. As the train steamed out, the station echoed with my friends' cheers and was lit up by the flashlights of the press photographers. Many a sleepy head appeared at the carriage windows roused by this unusual midnight disturbance. It was a day or two before the General Election, and one enterprising journalist who was on the train, taking me for the local candidate, went so far as to seek an interview with me in my sleeping-berth. Although doubtless disappointed at finding that I was no politician, the journalist's gift for getting " copy " out of everything enabled him to turn the interview to advantage, and I was amused to read on the following day an account of some of my experiences as a Court photographer.

CHAPTER XVI

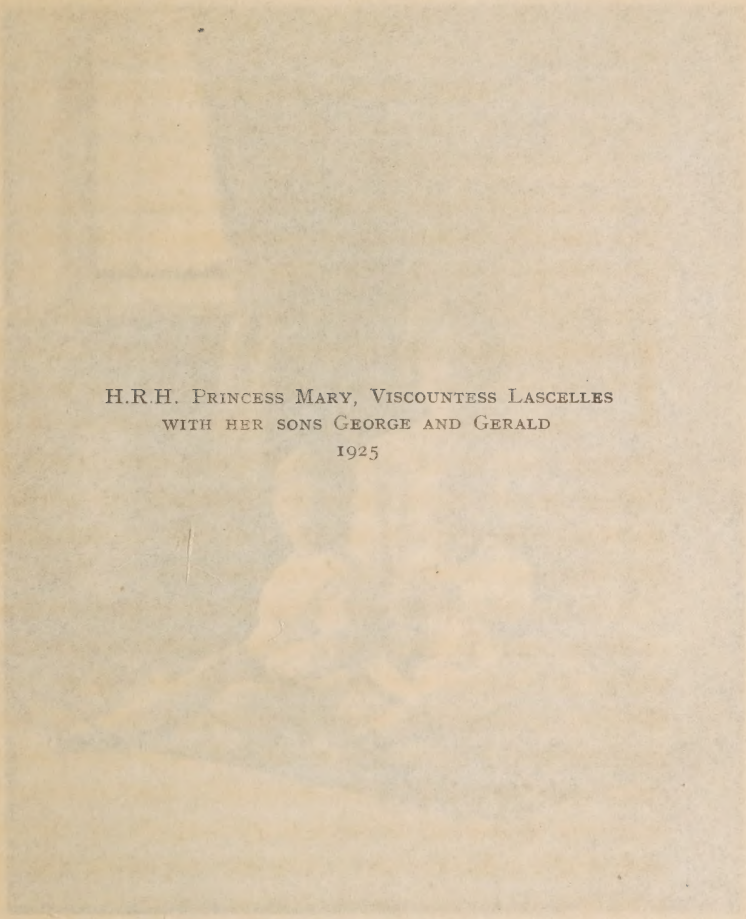
THE RISING GENERATION

My first visit to Chesterfield House—Princess Mary's consideration—" Mr. George "—A proud mother—" Mr. George " picks flowers in a Bond Street studio—His first standing photograph—" Mr. Gerald's " christening—A family group—Undivided attention needed to ensure most satisfactory results—A charming trio—The Princess Elizabeth.

FOR some years past people have been kind enough to suggest that I ought to write my reminiscences. Each time, however, I have refused. After all, I am still a youngish man, with, I hope, many more years in the studio ahead of me, and the difficulty of writing at all a satisfactory last chapter seemed insuperable.

Fortunately, however, I came down here to Cannes to write, and within twenty-four hours I realized what the final chapter would inevitably be. Here, on the Riviera, among the hotel population, that is, happy parents do not appear to exist. I have seen only one child accompanied by its mother. And even in this case the nurse in attendance danced all the time with the husband, while the mother took the floor with the expensive professionals.

Yes, Cannes in the height of the season epitomizes all the restlessness and heart-sickness of the present post-war epoch. Every one seems to be trying to forget somebody or something. Elderly matrons have their shingled heads waved religiously every



H.R.H. Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles
with her sons George and Gerald
1925

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H.R.H. PRINCESS MARY, VISCOUNTESS LASCELLES
WITH HER SONS GEORGE AND GERALD. 1925

morning and themselves dance irreligiously every night. Fat financiers eat heavily and gamble until dawn. The flat glitter of the Restaurant des Ambassadeurs, the snobbish cattishness of the Circle Nautique, the mad driving of the motor-car fiends, the endless, envious, yet disparaging chatter about jewellery and furs, the fetid atmosphere of the Casino, the extravagant boredom of the great hotels, the utter selfishness of it all, make one sick for a return to a happy family life. And no better example of such happy family life can be found than in our own Royal Family, and in particular in the home life of Princess Mary.

Throughout this book I have said little or nothing about Her Royal Highness. After photographing her as a child I never had the honour of a sitting from her until after her marriage. However, when her elder boy was four months old, she sent for me at Chesterfield House. I chose the ball-room for the temporary studio, and was given as much time as I liked for taking the photographs. Not once, on that occasion or on the other four subsequent ones, have the sittings been in any way curtailed at the request of Her Royal Highness. Indeed, she has always waited for me to say when I had finished, although she is, of course, one of the busiest women in the country.

The Princess had chosen for this sitting a most suitable creamy lace dress, wisely avoiding any unnecessary jewellery. The only ornament which she wore was a rope of lovely pearls, while the baby had on a fine white cambric dress with the large blue

sash, so typical of English Royal children. I took "Mr. George"—he is always referred to as Mr. George—in my arms to make friends with him, as I always do with babies. I then handed him to his mother in the exact position in which I wished to photograph him. "None of the pictures which have been published do him justice, he has such lovely colouring," I could not help saying. She realized that I was quite sincere, and was as delighted as any mother would be. In the middle of the sitting the door opened and in came Lord Lascelles. I could not help thinking how seldom a father puts in an appearance on these occasions.

The next time I saw Mr. George was at my own studio. He was by this time a fine, sturdy boy just feeling his feet. I was glad he had come to Bond Street, because I had just started photographing children in natural surroundings—really natural surroundings. I had arranged a slanting platform covered with moss, into which I placed each morning growing grass and flowers in tiny invisible pans. These were kept at night in my roof garden. Naturally the kind of flower available depended on the season, and this being May, it was primroses. Mr. George had a royal time with them. If I allowed every child to pluck as many as I let him, Covent Garden could not keep me supplied. Fortunately he was wearing a boyish smock which admirably suited his surroundings. There he sat and wriggled ecstatically—a picture of health and happiness, rooting up primroses by handfuls, getting his hands covered with earth, and altogether enjoying himself

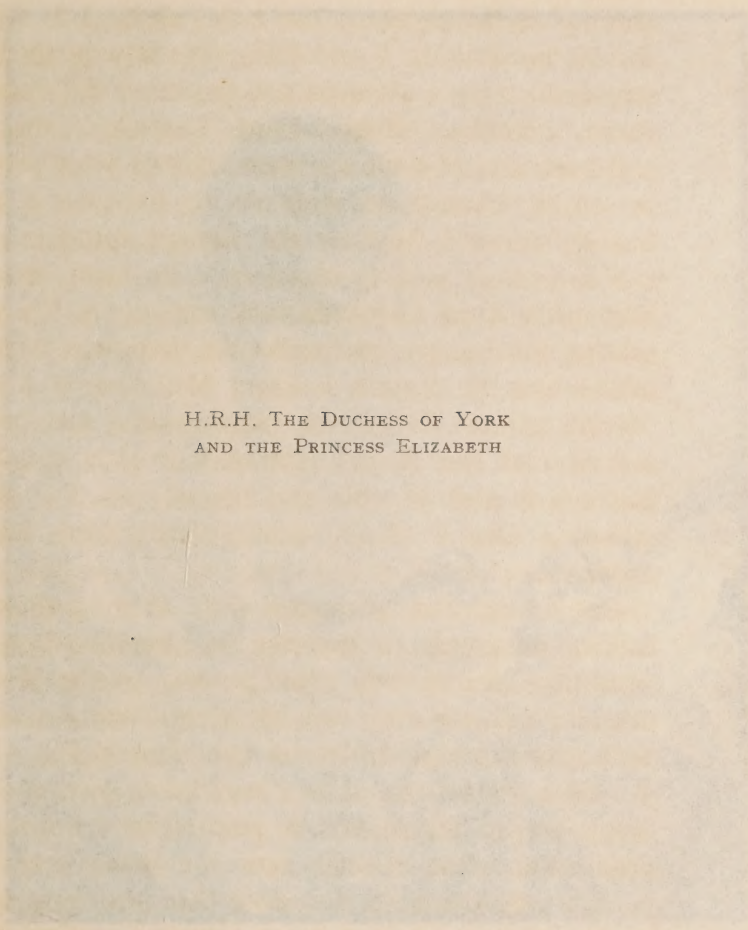
enormously. He picked so many flowers that even the nurse remarked upon it. "Georgie, Georgie," she said, "I am sure you have picked enough." For once I disagreed with a nurse. "It's all right!" I replied. "I don't mind if he picks the lot, he looks so happy." And sure enough he did. First he filled his little basket with them and then he clutched the rest in his chubby little fingers. There was not a single one left by the time I had finished photographing him.

After I had taken a number of pictures of him on the grass bank (which, when I submitted the proofs, completely mystified Princess Mary), the nurse told me that Her Royal Highness wished him to be photographed in the crawlers which he always wore in the nursery. "I do hope it will be possible to get one of him standing," she added. "He is just beginning to stand alone." This time I gave Mr. George a large ball to play with. He was very tottery, however, and sat down hard time and again. I wondered then, as I often have before, that children do not hurt themselves when they do this. As for Mr. George, the more he bumped the more he laughed, and sitting down by mistake he only thought a huge joke. I managed to take him, however, in between his frequent "crashes" and thus secured the first standing photograph of the King's grandson.

On my third visit I went to Goldsborough Hall, this time for the christening of "Mr. Gerald." So much fuss had been made in advance about the ceremony, and such a bombardment had been directed at Princess Mary and Lord Lascelles from

press photographers and others, that it was decided to keep the actual day and hour a secret. I was staying at Harrogate, a few miles away, and was, of course, informed. I motored over early on the great day and set up my temporary studio in the drawing-room. Princess Mary, Lord Lascelles, the two children, and two nurses were all that were present. It would have been difficult to imagine a more homely scene. By now Mr. George could and did run anywhere and everywhere. In fact, to keep him quiet Lord Lascelles took him up in his arms, and so charmingly unconscious a pose was it that I asked him to remain holding Mr. George for the official group. When the photographs were over I inquired of Her Royal Highness if they might be published, and to this she agreed, on the understanding that I should first submit them for her approval.

But I ventured to suggest that, as the public was taking so great an interest in the christening, it would be nice if they could appear in the Monday morning's paper—this was Saturday—simultaneously with the announcement of the christening. "No photographs of him of any sort have yet appeared, Your Royal Highness," I pointed out humbly in conclusion. She readily saw the point and gave permission, although it meant that she was unable to see the proofs before publication. Actually I only chose four from among the large number I had taken, and when the proofs were finally submitted to Her Royal Highness, she chose just that four for her own use.



H.R.H. The Duchess of York
and the Princess Elizabeth

To face page 244

press photographers and others, that it was decided to keep the actual day and hour a secret. I was staying at Harewood, a few miles away, and was, of course, informed. I motored over early on the great day and set up my temporary studio in the drawing-room. Princess Mary, Lord Lascelles, the two children and two nurses were all that were present. It would have been difficult to imagine a more homely scene. By now Mr. George could and did run anywhere and everywhere. In fact, to keep him quiet Lord Lascelles took him up in his arms, and so charmingly unconscious a pose was it that I asked him to remain holding Mr. George for the official group. When the photographs were over I inquired of Her Royal Highness if they might be published, and to this she agreed, on the understanding that I should first submit them for her approval.

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H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF YORK AND THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

My fourth visit was once more to Chesterfield House. Somehow or other, although I spent at least an hour there, I did not feel at the end of the sitting that I had done as well as on previous visits. I confessed this to the nurse and said that in spite of, probably because of, the devotion of the parents, the children had become so excited that the photographs had suffered, and that I wished I could have the children just to myself for one photograph, with nobody else present. For by this time Mr. George and I had become friends. He was always pleased to see me, but whether it was cupboard love for the new toys—I never took the same ones twice—I will not say. Mr. Gerald was still too young to be influenced by bribery, but I thought that if I could get them alone I would not feel that slight restraint which a commoner cannot help experiencing in the presence of Royalty, however gracious they may be.

To my surprise I received a note a few days later from the nurse to say that Her Royal Highness would be away the following week and would be pleased to let me have another sitting of the children by themselves. When I arrived the nurse came in holding Mr. Gerald, with Mr. George walking by her side. Laughingly she handed me Mr. Gerald. "Now you've got your own way, Mr. Speaight," she said, and though not actually leaving the room, kept at a discreet distance. I certainly had hard work that day with both the children. But I had asked to have them alone, so I could not complain. In spite of the watchful eye of the nurse, who was, however, right at the other end of the ball-room, I felt some

little responsibility with Mr. Gerald crawling adventurously in all directions and Mr. George romping all round me. However everything went well.

The last time I photographed them was at Goldsborough Hall once more. Lord Lascelles happened to be away, so I used the oak-panelled library for my studio. As in Brussels, I wanted to vary the background. This time, however, my Royal sitter appreciated the reason for the change, being as anxious as I was for a successful result. Princess Mary was wearing one of those pretty, hand-painted chiffon dresses in soft pastel shades which suited her admirably. Of all the pictures I have taken those were the most homely, with the Princess sitting on the floor, and the children on either side of her playing with the dog !

* * * * *

Anyone who writes his Memoirs while still in middle age must find it very difficult to decide how to bring his story to an end. All the time he is writing fresh events are happening, and even when the manuscript is waiting for the printer some fresh experience may happen, without mention of which his story must seem incomplete. This is just what has occurred in my case. No sooner had the last chapter of these Memoirs been concluded than there was announced the happy news of the birth of a daughter to the Duke and Duchess of York. Having photographed both their Royal Highnesses as children, I felt a particular interest in the event ; and so my delight can

well be imagined when, shortly afterwards, the Duke honoured me with a visit and requested me to take the first photographs of the baby Princess.

At some future time I hope to have the pleasure of recording the circumstances under which these pictures were made; but the days are passing quickly and the publishers grow restless. So for the present these things must remain unwritten, and I can think of no better way of ending these Memoirs than by wishing long life, health, and happiness to the little Princess Elizabeth.

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